

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

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COLIN ROACH

86 arrested for demanding the truth

The campaign to uncover the truth of what happened to Colin Roach, the 21 year old black youth who was killed in Stoke Newington Police Station on 12 January, has come under a calculated and vicious attack from the state. On 12 March the police attacked the third demonstration of the Roach Family Support Committee calling for an independent public inquiry, bringing the total number of arrests to 86. By their brutal actions the police have made it plain that they are out to prevent black people exercising the democratic right to go onto the streets and protest against the police. As well as continuing the campaign for an independent inquiry the supporters of the Roach family must now rally round to defend those, especially the black youth, who are on the front line of the state's assault.

The events of 12 March are a major attack on democratic rights. Colin Roach has been killed, the police have beaten and arrested his father, James

Roach, they have put charges against his Councillor Dennis Twomey and 84 others for demonstrating to demand the truth. From where comes the outcry

against this disgraceful attack?

The Fleet Street papers have kept off their pages all photographs and all but the briefest of reports. And with one or two exceptions the MPs have yet to raise more than a whisper in protest. Will the democrats sitting in the 'Mother of Democracy' stay dumb whilst the police brutally force black people off the streets?

Defiance and organisation against the state's attack comes from those on the front line, the youth themselves. The RFSC Defence Campaign has been set

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TROOPS OUT NOW! report of 12 March BISM demonstration, page 12



FREE NELSON MANDELA! 24 hour pickets in Leeds, Manchester, Dundee and London, reports on page 3



£1.5 bn profit for banks

In the wake of the world crisis, the record level of bankruptcies in Britain and the growing threat of major defaults on international loans, the profits of the four major British banks were still a staggering £1.5bn. Although this was a fall of 10% on the record profits of the previous year, these results were achieved in spite of a massive 'bad and doubtful debt provision' of £962m – two and a half times the provision for 1981. Confidence that such high profits would be achieved in the future was shown when all the banks increased the dividends paid to shareholders – Barclays by 20%, Lloyds and NatWest by 15% and Midland by 6%. Bank share prices rose considerably.

Out of the growing worldwide poverty and starvation, the British imperialist banks continue to accumulate vast amounts of wealth. The total assets of these four banks in 1982 were £196bn, an increase of 22% on the previous year.

	Pre-tax profit 1982 £m	Bad debt provision 1982 £m	Total assets end-1982 £bn
Barclays	495	318	59
NatWest	439	229	54.5
Midlands	251	196	48
Lloyds	316	219	34.5
	1,501	962	196.0

The fifth largest British bank, Standard Chartered Bank, after doubling its bad debt provisions, reported a profit of £242m – a fall of only 7% on the previous year. 32% of its profits came from its stake in the brutal racist South African apartheid regime.

The banks are totally parasitic – they produce no wealth. But their share in, and control over, the wealth produced worldwide continues to grow. Their assets in the final analysis depend on the ability of those who borrow from them continually to pay back their loans with interest. With the stagnating world

economy, the oil crisis and the near bankruptcy of many oppressed nations – at least 40 are behind with debt repayments – the international banks are threatened with major defaults. Their response has been to 'squeeze those indebted to them even further – especially the oppressed nations.

In the case of oppressed nations the process consists of a number of stages. The banks make it clear that they will refuse to lend more to those countries in 'difficulties' unless the International Monetary Fund (IMF) steps in with immediate loans to allow debt repayments to continue while the rescheduling of the debts takes place and new loans are negotiated. A condition for the IMF loan being granted is that the debtor country accepts an 'austerity' programme – unemployment, cuts in government expenditure and other measures – to 'reform its financial affairs' which are designed to squeeze and oppress the population even further. The IMF acts as the 'political' arm of the imperialist banks. When it has done its dirty work the banks then step in and reschedule their debts and offer new loans – but at a price!

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if you want peace –

Imperialism, led by US and British imperialism, speaks of peace whilst preparing for war. To defend their riches the imperialists threaten the world with nuclear holocaust. Hundreds of thousands of people in Britain, spearheaded by the Greenham Common women, and millions throughout the world are mobilising against the imperialist warmongers.

Increasing numbers of peace campaigners recognise that the fight for peace and the fight against imperialism are one struggle. FRFI supports all opposition to imperialist war plans. FRFI fights to unite the peace movement with all anti-imperialist struggles: in Ireland, South Africa, Palestine, Central America and in solidarity with the socialist countries.

FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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editorial

TORY BRITAIN

Despite the massive increase in unemployment, the growing numbers of British people living in poverty, the record levels of bankruptcies and the lowest level of manufacturing output for 16 years, if a general election took place tomorrow the Thatcher government would almost certainly be returned. The explanation for this apparently remarkable fact cannot be found in the fall in the level of inflation for it is precisely the intensity of the recession that has ensured that fall. It has to be looked for in the political and social consequences that the economic crisis has so far had on the people of this country. A guide to this is given by an examination of the very different effects that the last five Tory budgets have had on the living standards of different sections of the population. That is, the effects on the class divisions in British society.

The last five Tory budgets have dramatically increased the gap between the rich and poor. At the two extremes of the scale we find a typical company director on £45,000 a year receiving an increase of £120 a week in real income since 1979 – a rise of nearly 25%, while a typical manual worker who has recently lost a job would be worse off by £15.30 a week in real terms – a fall of over 21% in income. Further evidence that the brunt of the crisis is falling on the poorest sections of the working class comes from an analysis of the incomes of nine typical families over the past five years (report in *Sunday Times* 20 March 1983). Unemployed workers with families lost the most, followed by semi-skilled workers – a drop in income of £8.05 per week (-8%), and council manual workers – a drop of income of £4.24 (-4.6%). A couple on a pension, trying to exist on the pittance the capitalist state gives to those it has little further use for, lost out still further with a fall in

income of £1.42 per week (-2.3%).

In contrast with this, company directors (a gain of 24.5%), senior managers (9.5%), young single civil servants (5.4%) and middle managers (2.5%) are all considerably improving their relative position. And what is even more significant is that well paid skilled manual workers are holding their own with an overall gain of £1.70 per week (1.2%). There can be little doubt that the main sections of the population which have voted Tory over the past five years have little reason for changing their vote at the present time.

Thatcher's government certainly looks after the interests of the parasitical class it represents. The bankers, the directors and managers of large companies and financial institutions are all doing remarkably well. And her policies are still attractive to the aspiring middle class and the well paid skilled workers who can hold on to their jobs. Significantly, she has also managed to deepen

the divisions in the working class. The threat of growing unemployment has dramatically curbed the power of traditionally militant sections of the working class. The miners chose to hang on to the jobs they have rather than fight for the jobs that will almost certainly go in the future. Their relatively high pay and immediate stake in the system dictated this and the Thatcher government policies have been designed to encourage them to keep it this way. Tory budgets have only reinforced this trend.

It is the poor and unemployed who are being hammered into the ground. And no political party is fighting to represent their interests – they have no political power at the present time. The attitude taken by all the political parties in Britain to the most oppressed sections of the working class is best summed up by the remarks of one cynical journalist in *The Guardian* on the day after the budget 'the poor can be downtrodden with political impunity...' and '...the poor... don't have many votes and many of them don't vote at all'. Thatcher's government has felt able to ignore the plight of the poor and unemployed and turn on them precisely because no political party is prepared to fight for their interests. It has also made clear that it already has plans for dealing with the inevitable discontent. Public expenditure on law, order and protective services has increased by 20% since the Tory government took office. And the Police Bill, at present making its way through parliament, gives the forces of law and order all the power they need.

The Labour Party and organised trade union movement have never concerned themselves with the poor and unemployed. Tory party political broadcasts have recently been making a great deal of this fact by pointing out that the Labour Party has never reduced unemployment on coming into office. What has the organised trade union movement done to organise the unemployed – precisely nothing. Little wonder then that there has been no revival of the political fortunes of the Labour Party. Those sections of well paid workers which the Labour Party and organised trade union movement represent have shifted to the right as the crisis has deepened. Many of them have moved towards the SPD/Liberal Alliance. Terrified and threatened by any further polarisation of British society along class lines they reject the Tory Party and for the same reasons they equally cannot tolerate any shift to the left in the Labour Party itself however minimal. The by-election results in Bermondsey and Darlington confirm this trend. Many traditional Labour Party supporters will now only give their vote to a 'moderate' Labour candidate. In the absence of such a candidate it will go to the Alliance.

The poor and unemployed workers in Britain can have no confidence whatsoever in the cynical manoeuvres and politics of the British political parties. Eventually, disgusted with the whole charade of parliamentary democracy, they will organise their own fightback outside the present party system. It is only after this takes place that we will once again experience a revival of real political struggle in Britain.

BANK PROFITS

continued from page 1

Banks are not only increasing the interest charged on rescheduled debts but amassing enormous fees for rescheduling old loans and giving out new loans. Mexico will pay almost \$200m in fees alone for its rescheduling. It will pay an interest rate of 1½ per cent over and above the inter-bank rate. This is much more than Mexico was paying before and will mean a doubling of profits by many major banks on assets in Mexico. British banks which have outstanding loans of \$7bn to Mexico and which have been asked to lend a further \$500m will have a share in this extra loot. These developments point to even higher bank profits in the immediate future. Meanwhile in Mexico by the end of this year not much more than half the Mexican labour force will be in full time employment.

Banking profits from overseas have been a significant factor, together with the income from North Sea Oil, in limiting the immediate effects of the world crisis on the British economy. Private invisible exports – private 'earnings from the provision of services to people living abroad' – account for one third of Britain's foreign earnings. In 1981 they contributed to a surplus of over £6bn to the balance of payments. Nearly £3½bn came from earnings from the 'City of London', with more than half of this coming from banking profits and income.

To maintain the economic stability of imperialist Britain and the profits of the imperialist banks, millions of people throughout the world are being driven into poverty and starvation. The Thatcher government speaks for the bankers and City of London. British workers in opposing that government must side with the oppressed masses throughout the world who are driven into poverty and are brutalised and exploited to satisfy the rapacious demands of the British imperialist banks.

**Nationalise the imperialist banks
Liquidate all debts to oppressed nations**

David Reed

SOUTH AFRICA IN BRIEF

● Detained for Eighth Time

Thozamile Gqweta, president of the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), was detained for the eighth time last week, the most anyone has ever been detained in South Africa. Whilst giving evidence for the defence at a trial in Ciskei of 4 men charged with 'terrorist' activities and being members of the banned African National Congress, Thozamile Gqweta described his torture at the hands of the security police. On several occasions, he had been stripped before being handcuffed and suspended, then a wet canvas bag was put over his head and tightened around his neck. Electric shocks were then applied to his toes and cold water poured on his naked body. When he complained he was told he would be assaulted each and every day during his interrogation until he complained no more.

Thozamile Gqweta, for all the times he has been detained, has never been convicted of an offence. He is shortly to be charged together with SAAWU vice-president, Sisa Njikelana, and 7 other people recently detained, with being engaged in 'ANC activities'.

● Another death in detention

Hours after his family had been assured by the police that he was in good health, Thembe Simon Mndawe, an ANC freedom fighter, was found hanging in his police cell in the eastern Transvaal town of Nelspruit. Thembe Simon Mndawe is the 57th person known to have died in police custody since the introduction of detention without trial in 1963. The African National Congress have vowed that his murder like that of comrades Solwande Ngudle, Suliman Salojee, Ahmed Timol, Joseph Mdluli, Jacon Mashabane, Ernest Mamasila, and many others, murdered by the Fascist South African police, SHALL BE AVENGED.

● Sun City Mark 2

The South African regime has recently announced its intention to grant so-called 'full independence' to the KwaNdebele 'homeland'. Also being planned for KwaNdebele is the building of a multi-million Rand luxury casino and entertainment resort to rival Sun City in Bophuthatswana. Whites from all over South Africa will be able to indulge in their decadent pleasures, using the huge profits extracted by the sweat and blood of black workers. While for the black people forced to live in the barren wasteland, KwaNdebele offers nothing more than grinding poverty, starvation, diseases and unemployment.

Ruby Khan

● Banks Profits Rise

South Africa's two largest banking groups, Barclays National and Standard, both increased their profits enormously in 1982. Barclays National increased their total assets by 21.6% from R10.8 billion to R13.1 billion in 1982 and their operating profits by 22.3% from R124.7 million to R152.5 million. Likewise Standard Bank's total assets increased from R8.4 billion to R10 billion, and their operating profits by 52.6% to R130.1 million.

● Norma Kitson Appeal

Supporters of last year's non-stop picket of South Africa House packed the court to hear Norma Kitson's appeal against conviction for obstruction. The Inner London Crown Court turned down the appeal, barely pausing for one minute to weigh the evidence. This evidence proved that Norma's arrest was no more than police persecution and British collaboration with apartheid. Pickets of up to 500 people had taken place, yet on the day of Norma's arrest the picket was much smaller. Whilst upholding the conviction the Magistrates reduced the sentence to a conditional discharge. After this, when Norma addressed the court, ushers hastily cleared it.

FIGHT POLICE BILL

Over the past month, even the servile British press reported countless instances of police brutality, thuggery, armed raids and deaths in police custody. The West Midlands police have been on a rampage. In a series of armed raids they have smashed their way into black peoples' houses and old peoples' homes, holding their victims at gunpoint. It was whilst in their hands that James Davey was so brutally assaulted that he died after two weeks on a life-support machine. Liverpool police recently smashed down the door of a 73 year old woman's house, beat her up and took her into custody. Her crime? Her daughter owed motoring fines! The racist Stoke Newington police have violently attacked pickets and demonstrations calling for the truth about the murder of Colin Roach. Elsewhere in London, the police have forced black people to strip naked in public.

Whilst the police are thus brutalising and killing people, a Police Bill is going through Parliament which will legalise many of the methods they already use against the oppressed. This Bill will massively increase police powers and remove existing legal defences against police brutality and repression. It gives the police almost unlimited powers to set up roadblocks, to stop and search, to search homes and workplaces and the records of doctors, social workers and journalists. It allows them to make intimate body searches and to fingerprint and question juveniles.

It is no coincidence that the police should be seeking such powers so soon after the appointment of Sir Kenneth Newman as head of the London police. Opposition to increasing unemployment, poverty and repression is growing and is being led by those most affected – the unemployed and oppressed black and white youth. The British state is now being openly prepared for the inevitable struggles to come.

Yet in the face of this severe attack on

democratic rights, the Labour Party has totally failed to fight for the interests of the oppressed sections of the working class. Opposition to the police and to the Police Bill in particular has come from two different sections of society. The most militant and uncompromising opposition has come from the oppressed sections of the working class led by black people. On the other hand the Police Bill has attracted widespread opposition from sections of the middle class – journalists, doctors, lawyers and other professionals – who see their rights threatened. The Labour Party has tried to drive a wedge between these two sources of opposition by defending the interests only of the middle classes, leaving the oppressed to fight on alone. Its real concern is to prevent the middle-classes being alienated from the police. Labour MP Robert Kilroy-Silk put it clearly:

'It is possible daily to get away with the alienation of young people. They are not as articulate as others, are not

well organised and do not have the political clout to get their grievances redressed... Once they (the police) interfere in the ordinary lives of middle class, law abiding and articulate people, the confidence of that group in the police will be destroyed. That will lead to a massive and radical overhaul of police public relations.'

The Labour Party, which represents the interests of the middle classes and privileged sections of the working class, has when in government always used the police against the most oppressed sections of the working class. Its current 'opposition' to the Police Bill is no more than an attempt to prevent wider sections joining the struggle against the racist and reactionary British police. The effect is to isolate those already bearing the brunt of police repression.

It is now highly likely that Whitelaw will bow to the pressure from various professional organisations and modify sections of the Bill relating to police powers to search journalists', doctors' and lawyers' files. Yet the clauses which legalise the day in, day out brutalisation and repression of working class people, especially black and unemployed youth, will almost certainly become law. The Labour Party has hardly raised a whisper against this. It only ever expresses concern for black people when it wants their votes.

The struggle against police repression and against the attacks on vitally necessary democratic rights will not be led by the party whose sole concern is to stop 'alienating the middle classes'. It will be led by the most oppressed sections of the working class, who are daily engaged in struggle against the racist police.

south africa

FREE MANDELA!



Four very successful 24 hour pickets were held from 5.30pm 18 March to 5.30pm 19 March in Leeds, Dundee, Manchester and outside the South African Embassy in London. The pickets, called under the slogans 'Free Nelson Mandela! Free all South African Political Prisoners!' were organised by FRFI in Leeds and Manchester and by City Group AAM in London, AAM in Dundee. Over 7,000 people signed the AAM's Free Nelson Mandela petition and hundreds joined the pickets.

LEEDS

The 24 hour picket in Leeds organised by FRFI filled Dortmund Square with the sound of South African freedom songs and slogans. The picket was supported by Leeds NUPE No 1 Branch, members of the University Branch of the AAM, a CP member, County Councillor Best and the black and anti-racist white youth of the Precincts.

Fascists tried to attack the picket but were challenged and driven away. The police continually harassed the picket. They even cordoned off Dortmund Square and threatened arrests if the picket banner was not moved. We moved it – it looked even better when we tied it to the tape cordoning off Dortmund Square!

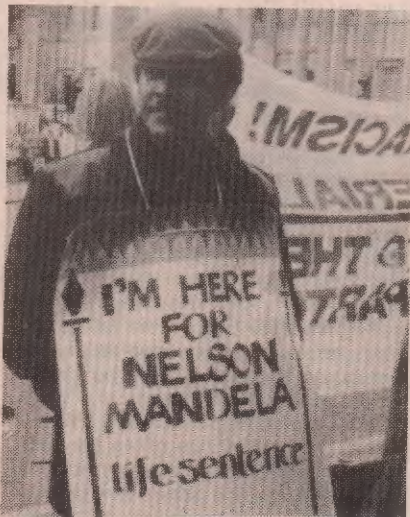
It was then that the black and anti-racist white youth joined the picket. They all signed the petition, took FRFI and petitions to fill up and raised their voices in song. The 'Black Vigilantes' even made up their own versions of the picket songs. They sang about how they would get no dumplings or rice and peas if they were locked up in Millgarth, and how the fascists ought to be locked up in Millgarth and they would throw away the keys. Their militant singing and chanting took on a form that the streets of Leeds had never heard before as the youth gained their voice. The chant of 'Black Vigilantes! Murda! Murda!' drowned the noise of the city.

DUNDEE

In Dundee the AAM's picket was supported by FRFI, Communist Party, Labour students and others. Over £100 was collected for a SWAPO medical kit.

The picket took off with the rousing chorus of the 'Victory Song' which local

youth took part in. A rally was held in the afternoon with speakers from AAM, FRFI and the Labour Party. Emie Ross MP said: 'The next Labour government will support the liberation struggles in South Africa economically and militarily...'. The FRFI speaker argued that solidarity work must go forward on the streets through active, vigorous public work. Leonard McCabe



MANCHESTER

The Manchester picket was supported by the World Disarmament Campaign, whose peace caravan and PA system were invaluable in broadcasting freedom songs and speeches. Youth enthusiastically joined the picket and as well as selling 250 FRFIs, over 1,600 people signed the petition.

Despite police harassment and the sectarian refusal of the local left organisations (SWP and RCP members even

refused to sign the petition) to support the picket, it was a great success. In the heart of Manchester tens of thousands heard about the heroic struggle of the South African people. Alan McDonald

LONDON

Outside South Africa House in London each of the 530 South African political prisoners was represented by a picketer bearing a placard. The picket was supported by RCG, WRP, RCL, YCL, AAM Groups from Bristol, Camden and Colchester, Gay organisations, Labour Party wards, trade unions and student unions and peace groups. Several Labour MPs and Councillors attended and spoke at the picket including Stanley Clinton Davies, Frank Dobson, Reg Race, Alf Dubs, Joan Lester, Paul Boateng, Ben Bousquet and several others.

Most heartening was the connection made between the fight in South Africa and the anti-racist struggle in Britain. Black youth joined the picket and soon the whole picket was chanting 'ANC – Colin Roach! One Struggle! One Fight!'. Mrs Nellie Knight, whose family fought police harassment spoke giving solidarity to the ANC and appealed for support for the campaign about Colin Roach's death. One of the black youth challenged Alf Dubs MP as to what action he and other MPs were taking about Colin Roach's death. The picket cheered David Reed of FRFI when he asked how many had to die in British police stations as well as in oppressed nations, before there is an outcry in Parliament. He condemned successive governments – Tory and Labour – for their consistent support for British imperialist oppression in South Africa.

At its height, 250-strong, and throughout the picket clearly took the side of all the oppressed fighting imperialism. 'If you are the big tree we are the small axe ready to cut you down. Victory to ANC! Victory to SWAPO!' Ruby and Uta



Man's Inhumanity to Man

An Ode to Eddie Amoo & The Real Thing

I have no friends
Who grow fat on the
Krugerrand
Blood stained Krugerrand
Blood stains
of Black folk.
Who have suffered
Ho Jah
How they have suffered!
And have died by the
thousands – millions.
Murdered
For the Krugerrand
Eddie has in his hand.

Eddie you're killing them too.
Briame Reatus

The Real Thing is a black band from Liverpool 8, who had two hits in the mid 70s, including *You to me are everything* which reached No 1. A few weeks ago, having told family and friends they were touring Nigeria, they went with David Essex to Sun City, South Africa. Sun City is an extravagant, purpose-built leisure centre for the whites, located in the poverty-stricken 'homeland' of Bophuthatswana. Starvation is such that many black people are forced to rake through its rubbish bins for something to eat; its opening festivities co-incided with the mourning period following the murder of Steve Biko.

Anger among people in Liverpool 8 at the treachery of *The Real Thing* is intense. One member, Dave Smith, was stoned when he set foot in Granby Street. Until this time, Briame Reatus was like many others a close friend to Eddie Amoo and other band member.

**BOYCOTT
THE REAL THING!**

PLESSEY VETO VICTORY

As a general election approaches the Labour Party is said to be discussing a radical new policy on South Africa. Labour spokesmen promise much – sanctions, support for the liberation movements – i.e. a break with past Labour Government's treacherous backing for apartheid. Promises are cheap. Deeds are another matter – as we have seen recently in Tower Hamlets.

Tower Hamlets Labour Council has finally decided (by 25 votes to 21) to cancel a £1/2m contract with Plessey's, because of the company's links with apartheid. But before you shout 'Well done Tower Hamlets Labour Council' it is as well to know the whole story. The Tower Hamlets Labour group has consistently backed the Plessey contract. Only determined opposition by a minority of Labour Councillors with Liberal support, got the contract stopped.

Labour Councillor Cosmas Desmond opposed the contract. To fight it he was forced to leave the Labour group. 7 Labour councillors have been expelled from the Labour group for voting against the contract. Leader of the Labour Group, Paul Beasley (and the majority of the Labour councillors) supported Plessey's and joined with the Plessey unions, EPTU in particular, in fighting for the deal to go ahead. Yet all were fully conscious of Plessey's links with the racist regime – it supplies apartheid with military equipment. Two Anti-Apartheid lobbies of the council were held to make sure they all knew of these

links. The lobbies were supported by City and Hackney Groups of AAM, FRFI, Tower Hamlets & Hackney Trades Council and London Peace Action.

But the majority of Labour Councillors and the EPTU continued to support the contract – ignoring the call of the South African people for the total isolation of apartheid. Such isolation would hasten the downfall of apartheid and its imperialist backers. As the liberation struggle in South Africa intensifies it is challenging not only the interests of British imperialism but also of the privileged layers of the British working class who depend on it. It is these layers that Beasley & Co represent – hence their support for the Plessey contract. And it is the same story when Labour Governments come to office. When the choice lies between backing the oppressed masses of South Africa or backing British imperialist interests they have always taken the side of imperialism. That is why we say don't listen to the promises – watch the deeds.

Chris Fraser

COLIN ROACH

86 arrests

YOUTH FIGHT ON

The courts have played their part in trying to intimidate and harass the youths. To date 86 people have been arrested on framed up charges just for protesting about the death of Colin Roach. Most people are charged with threatening behaviour or obstruction; 19 face charges of assault on the police and 4 others face charges of actual bodily harm. Most of these charges have to be heard in a Magistrate's Court, ie no Jury. On charges that could go to Crown Court (be heard in front of a Jury) the police have often changed the charges to ones which can only be heard in a Magistrate's Court.

To try and prevent further support for protests on the streets by the youth, the police and the courts have imposed political bail conditions on some of the defendants. One youth, Cyrus Noor, who lives in South London, had a condition of bail that he did not travel North of the river Thames. Councillor Twomey arrested on 12 March was held in custody until 14 March. In court he refused to accept as a condition of bail that he did not take part in further demonstrations. He was therefore again imprisoned in a clear case of political detention. This resulted in a picket of 50 people outside the High Court when Councillor Twomey's application for bail went before a Judge. Only after all this protest was he granted bail. The police claim that certain people are 'Ring Leaders' and therefore tried to use bail conditions to prevent them from taking part in the campaign.

The police and the authorities have tried to stop supporters picketing the courts and going into the public gallery to express their support. On one occasion even the brother of one of the youths in court was not allowed to go into the public gallery and a court attendant hit him. When we protested six police arrived. When Cyrus Noor tried to speak from the dock he was viciously dragged out of court by about 10 police. When people shouted from the public gallery they were threatened with being thrown out.

These attacks have not prevented the youth from carrying on the fight. They have joined the noisy pickets of the courts - also supported by FRFI and

others. Because of these pickets the youth have been able to continue to stand on the streets chanting 'Colin Roach - No Cover-up!' and '86 arrested - Drop the Charges Now!' We have learnt that the pickets are vital so our voices can be heard in the courts and the youths can feel supported. We have learnt to fight for our rights - to change a bad solicitor to a good one, to challenge bail conditions, and most of all to stand together and support everybody facing charges. We the youths will continue the fight.

Jillian Higgins



STOP PRESS

In yet another attack on the campaign, the police arrested supporters attending Cyrus Noor's court case on 28 March. Cyrus was in court for 'breaching' his bail conditions - the police actually came onto a bus which was passing within 2 miles of Stoke Newington Police Station and arrested him!

Outside the court the Defence Campaign held a picket attended by 20 people including councillors. Threatening arrests, the police moved the picket across the road. Councillor Denise Robson states: 'By banning the group of demonstrators outside the court the police were demonstrating aggression towards us.'

As Cyrus Noor's case began there was a commotion outside the court and the sound of women screaming. Some people left the court to see what was happening. Then, incredibly, the authorities locked the court. Mark Hunte, who was a witness (and therefore could not stay in court) asked if he could leave. He was set on by PC G586 who was joined by two others, who violently dragged Mark out of court, assaulted and arrested him. Ace Kelly, who had left the court, was arrested and also assaulted. Five other people, all black, who were there for a separate case, were also arrested as the police went on the rampage.

The magistrate beat a hasty retreat as the police created havoc. Then he returned and shakenly granted Cyrus bail! Again it is conditional on him not going within a two mile radius of Stoke Newington Police Station. But it is a victory - a challenge to the political bail conditions imposed by the courts. A victory won in the face of the racist, rioting Hackney police. All those arrested appear in court at 10.00am 18 April, Old Street Magistrates Court.

PICKET

STOKE NEWINGTON
POLICE STATION,
STOKE NEWINGTON
HIGH ST. N16

EVERY SATURDAY

12-2pm

Organised by RFSC

BLACK THEATRE CO-OPERATIVE
ANNOUNCES A BENEFIT FOR
THE ROACH FAMILY SUPPORT
COMMITTEE

WITH MEMBERS OF THE BLACK
THEATRE CO-OPERATIVE AND
GUESTS INCLUDING

SAKA EATI
BENJAMIN SEPHANIA
SPARTACUS
INDIAN DANCERS

Date: Sunday 17 April

Venue: Half Moon Theatre, Mile End

Further details: RFSC, Tel: 254 7480

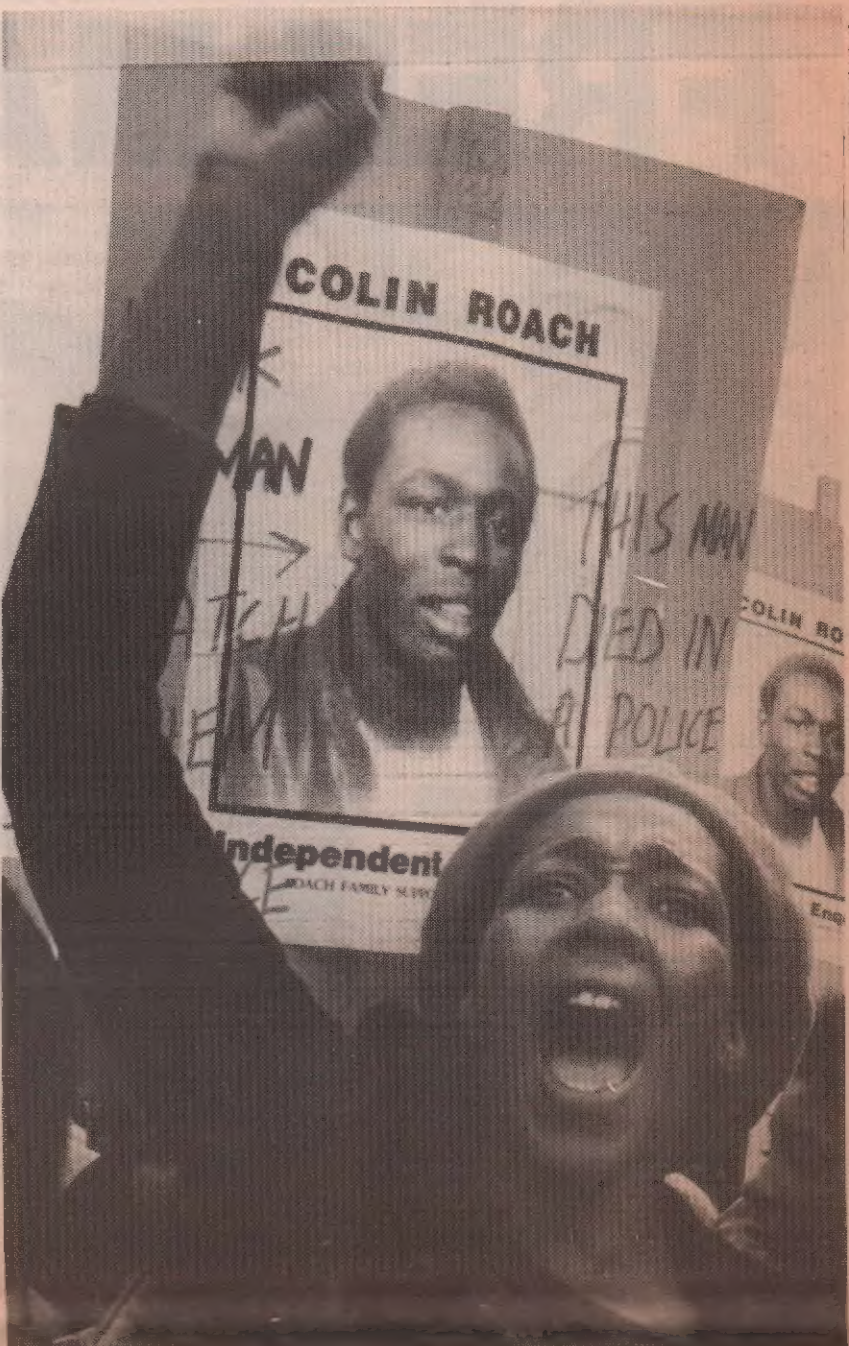


Colin Roach Demonstration

The third demonstration held by the Roach Family Support Committee (RFSC) was on 12 March - two months exactly after Colin Roach was found dead in Stoke Newington Police Station.

As soon as we left Hackney Town Hall the police began harassing Mr Roach. Again they left him alone when other demonstrators came to his aid. Loud and strong chants of 'Leave us alone', and 'Stoke Newington Police - Murderers', swept along the march and continued to Stoke Newington Police Station. The FRFI contingent was particularly noisy and militant as the march grew in size and determination. By now the demonstration was 700 strong, and people were chanting angrily 'Burn them' and 'Murder', some with clenched fists held defiantly in the air.

On the last demonstration the police had tried to stop us on our return journey. This time they were ready with their snatch squads. In Kingsland High Road, they first got rid of photographers and then they blocked the road. When the official van leading the demonstration reached the road block, they suddenly smashed its windows and dragged Councillor Twomey out. Dennis Twomey had to have hospital treatment, and has since been charged with assaulting 3 police. At the same time Mr James Roach, Colin's father, was brutally assaulted before being arrested. Other police charged like mad dogs into



the demonstrators, terrorising, scattering, and then arresting at random. The whole thing had been carefully planned and over 20 arrests had been made at this stage.

At the town hall the rally applauded a message of solidarity from the Building an Irish Solidarity Movement read out by Andy Goddard. The RFSC spokesman, Lestor Lewis, said a delegation was going to City Road Police Station. But the youth were determined that all should go to protest outside the police station, and immediately 400 of us set off. This caught the police off-guard and they hastily tried to control the situation. But we refused to be led by them knowing

the type of animals they are. Instead we dictated to them, even to the point of suddenly changing direction, and running free and unchained down the main road.

Outside City Road Police Station we carried on chanting and joking to keep our morale high, so that our brothers and sisters in the station would hear us. There were hundreds of police, who then put up barriers and slowly moved in on us. They reminded me of something from a horror movie. And once more they charged, on top of the picketers, and for not one second giving any thought to people they were crushing on the ground, only picking up 4 people to arrest them.

Dawn Trent

ACE KELLY'S STATEMENT

'I saw 2 photographers behind the line of police on the side walk being grabbed and pushed away, because they were taking photos. After this things started getting chaotic. Police were just grabbing people. I saw a young Asian lad just get grabbed (I don't think he'd been on the demo) and held against a shop window. I tried to get his name 3 times before they pulled him off to the van. One of the police tried to grab me, but I moved. All over the place I saw people being held. Then I saw police jump onto the lorry; they just grabbed and pulled and threw people off.

I was now standing a fair way behind the lorry when I noticed Mr Roach. He was talking to some police holding a woman. Suddenly Mr Roach was grabbed. I said "Hold on that's Mr Roach". By the time I said this I was head butted in the mouth by a very big policeman with a fat round face. I was grabbed, kicked and punched, until taken into the van, thrown onto the floor, trod on and told "Keep still you bastard". I was taken to the van by 6-8 police. Shortly afterwards a woman and Mr Roach were brought into the van. A big police-

man M313 said "If you bastards don't shut up, you'll get what Colin Roach got, we shot him". A Rasta man was every now and again given a backhand round the face. Cyrus Noor was on the floor of the coach sitting. He looked really drained as someone just beaten does. I said to the two who claimed they arrested me (H154 and H212) that I hadn't been arrested or cautioned so let me go or caution me and tell me what I'm arrested for. They thought this was a big laugh. H154 took out a coin, stood up and said "Heads - threatening behaviour, Tails - obstruction". I got tails.

From the time I was in my cell each and every time the police went by I demanded a phone call. G138, an old cop, said "Shut up you black bastard". A white youth, in the cell opposite shouted that the man in his cell was bleeding badly. We banged (from all 3 cells) and made noise until he got a doctor. This man (he'd driven the lorry) had been arrested at least an hour and half before he saw that doctor and was taken to hospital.'

Ace Kelly

COURT DATES

APRIL

6th 10am Old Street
7th 10am, 2pm Highbury
8th 10am, 2pm Highbury
8th 2pm Thames Magistrates
13th 10am Highbury
14th 10am, 2pm Highbury
18th 10am Old Street
20th 10am Highbury

MAY

4th 10am Highbury
10th 10am, 2pm Highbury
10th 10am, 2pm Old Street
11th 10am Old Street
17th 10am Highbury
18th 10am Highbury
25th 10am Highbury
27th 10am Old Street

JUNE

1st 2pm Old Street
2nd 2pm Old Street

COLIN ROACH 86 arrested for demanding the truth

continued from page 1

up at a meeting of the defendants to fight for the dropping of all charges alongside the main demand for an independent public inquiry. The Defence Campaign issued a declaration which reads:

'We, the defendants, have formed the "Roach Family Support Committee - Defence Campaign" to demand a full independent inquiry into the death of Colin Roach and to demand the dropping of all charges against those arrested during the Colin Roach campaign.

Despite attacks from the police and courts on ourselves and our rights we will continue to publicly demonstrate.'

Without defence of the youth the police will succeed in suppressing all protests. And protests are still needed for the truth to come out. At the moment the ruling class is supremely confident. The police have announced plans to build a new £2m police station in Stoke Newington. The inquest into Colin's death is due to resume in the 40-seat St Pancras Coroner's Court on 18 April. The Coroner has even refused to move the site of the inquest to Hackney Town Hall and so allow a proper public audience.

The only force that can stop the police rampage and the state's cover up of Colin's death is a major mobilisation of the community led by the youth. All democrats can and must support the campaign by demanding an end to the political suppression of the youth. FRFI gives its full support to the campaign because it is the youth who are leading the struggle for democratic rights.

Already six Hackney Councillors have signed the Defence Campaign's statement of support for the defendants. In order not to break the law Hackney Council finally agreed to pay the £4m precept to the police, but the police are trying to put all democratic protests outside the law. The Council has to back the youth and their campaign for all charges to be dropped. A delegation of defendants from the Defence Campaign has met Stoke Newington MP Ernie Roberts who pledges his support and who will put a question in Parliament on the right to demonstrate in Hackney.

All anti-racists have to respond immediately and follow the lead of the youth who are making great sacrifices for the campaign. For it is only by falling in with the youth that the vicious police assault unleashed in Stoke Newington will be defeated.

Come to the pickets, send support and donations, get your MP to raise the issue. ACT NOW!

COLIN ROACH - NO COVER UP!

86 ARRESTED - DROP THE CHARGES NOW!

POLICE OUT OF STOKE NEWINGTON!

HANDS OFF THE YOUTH!

Andy Goddard

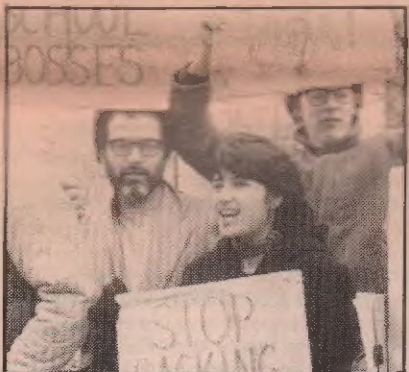
Roach Family Support Committee,
c/o 50 Rectory Road, Stoke Newington, London N16.
and RFSC - Defence Campaign,
c/o CAPA, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E3.

LIONEL VIDA REINSTATED

The ILEA full education committee which met on 22 March, voted with an overwhelming majority to reinstate Lionel Vida, an anti-racist teacher sacked over a year ago for opposing racism and defending black pupils in Catford school. Members of the Reinstate Lionel Vida Campaign (RLVC), anti-racist teachers and individuals as well as members of the Lewisham community held a demonstration outside County Hall and then packed the public gallery to heckle the racist Tory arguments for overturning the decision to reinstate Lionel.

John Fernandes, a black lecturer sacked for exposing the racism of the Hendon police cadets also showed his solidarity with Lionel's fight for justice. It was not only the Tories that provided a most disgusting display of racism. The previous evening, the Lewisham NUT branch for the third consecutive meeting refused to pass a motion to discuss Lionel Vida's sacking. To add gross insult to injury they promptly discussed the appropriate action to be taken if and when NUT members were sacked!!! The NUT have spelled it out loud and clear - they will not take action on behalf of victimised anti-racist NUT members.

Anti-racist teachers have won a victory but the fight against racism in education continues. The RLVC has called a public meeting: 'The Community Demands an Enquiry into Racism



in Schools and Police Harassment', Tuesday 12 April, 7.30pm, St Mary's Centre, Ladywell Road, SE13.

Victory to all anti-racist teachers! Racism out of schools!

Ruby Khan

NATFHE ATTACKS JOHN FERNANDES

John Fernandes was sacked from Hendon Police College for exposing the fascist essays written by police cadets there. The essays which contained the most foul racism, including reference to burning black people with petrol, were an embarrassment to the police and to those who talk of 'improving' police/community relations.

John Fernandes has fought to be reinstated at the college and to continue to teach a course there which challenges the racism of the cadets. His union, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE), has all along failed to support him. But now, NATFHE has gone further - it has severely criticised John Fernandes for revealing the essays to the public. NATFHE's report accuses him of:

'gross misjudgement of what would be acceptable behaviour to the majority of the union's members.'

Indeed! Evidently the fascist and racist ravings of the police cadets are acceptable to this union, it is the exposure of them which is not. A NATFHE spokesman was quoted saying that the union believed senior police were determined to see 'changes' take place and that the exposure of the essays had impeded this. Oh yes! Determined to sack anti-racists, determined to attack black youth and determined to protect the trainee fascists in blue uniform. And NATFHE by its disgraceful stand, has aided and abetted this police racism. Maxine Williams

DEFENCE COMMITTEE IN ST PAULS

Readers of 'Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!' will remember the report last year of Mrs Royal's acquittal on appeal from the charge of assaulting the police. Backed up by legal advice she has begun to take steps to sue the police for assault and injury.

Was it then a coincidence that her husband, Mr Joe Royal, should be attacked by Bristol police as he entered his home? And that he and four of his children should be on charges of assault?

On Saturday 15 January Joe Royal was stopped in his car and questioned as he drove home from the local chip shop. He finished his journey and was opening the door of his house when the same police pulled up. Halfway down the corridor he heard the door being smashed in. Turning round, the family's supper still in his hands, he saw with amazement the police breaking in. Next thing he knew his knee had been smashed with

a truncheon and he was lying on the ground writhing in pain. Two months later he would still be walking with a stick.

The children hearing the commotion, rushed to the scene. Mrs Royal ran out to call for help from her neighbours. The police radioed for reinforcements. Within a couple of minutes a large crowd of neighbours and friends were at the house, furious at this assault on the privacy of the family and determined to oppose the police's racist brutality. 60 policemen were on the scene when Mr Royal and four of the children were taken away. Mrs Royal was left to try to

LEEDS ANTI RACIST YOUTH

This poem shows the feelings of the black and white youths who have joined together to form the 'Black Vigilantes'. It is called vigilantes, but we do not go around beating every white youth indiscriminately. We aim for the right-wing fascists who have caused us to form this group. We feel that we have to make the stand as the police would rather ignore such right wing groups; they would rather pick on youths like the black and white youths who stand in the precincts.

The question we would like to ask of the West Yorkshire police is when they see large groups of white racist youths shouting Sieg Heil and racist slogans, do they shadow them and see what the score is? Don't the police think that we have the right to walk through town like everyone else without them trying to provoke us into being arrested?

The reason why the police do not shadow groups of fascist youths is because they have a sympathy with their fascist views, and see these groups as making life easier for them: they keep black people out of town. This the police consider a good thing as they see black youths as marauding trouble makers. The reason why black youths are seen as trouble makers is that in the Uprisings of '81 the black youth were, in the police's eyes, seen to be the ringleaders. This we do not consider the truth for black and white were seen to be united in the struggles of '81. Fascist youths can go around beating innocent black youths and white youths, who show unity with the black youth by wearing Red, Gold and Green emblems. These beatings the police support, because the white fascist youths, who are not connected with the police, are doing the job of the police, which the police consider a good thing.

But it seems now that the fascist youth are having problems as a recent article in Bulldog shows. The letter begins with a complaint 'about numerous attacks on white skinheads in the town centre of Leeds' and begs for help from other fascists as 'the blacks walk about in mobs of 20-30' and the fascists 'have no chance of defending (them-

selves) as (they) are greatly outnumbered'. The scared skinhead ends his plea to Bulldog, 'I don't know what you can do for us, but try and put the word around that all the white youths in Leeds should defend themselves from these black gangs... I speak for the skins of Leeds who have urged me to seek your assistance.' This shows that our struggle is a just one as we have the fascists on the run!



THE BLACK VIGILANTES

The Black Vigilantes are here to stay The Frontman know we won't run away. We come to town to stand our ground And show our feelings all around. The policeman come to move us away But we don't listen to what they say, Cos the Black Vigilantes are here to stay.

Up town, down town we are always around To stamp the Frontman into the ground. The Black Vigilantes is not for fun, If the Frontman come we will not run Before we do that we'll take up the gun. The struggle is ours, to win or lose That's the choice. We must choose!

The Black Vigilantes are both black and white

The fight for unity is still in sight. If the policeman come in our way We will fight for our freedom like the IRA. So let's get together and join as one. The fight will be hard, it won't be fun Until our true freedom we have won.

THE BLACK VIGILANTES! MURDER! MURDER!

The reason for the police provocation is to get us arrested so they can pressurise us to stop fighting back. A typical example is by giving us hefty fines which we can't afford, and by setting bail conditions banning us from areas of town where black and anti-racist white youth congregate.

Referring back to the poem:

'The Black Vigilantes are here to stay The Frontman know we won't run away.'

And an end to oppression is but one step away!

The Black Vigilantes
(Our motto is 'Without pain there is no gain!')

secure the shattered front door and to pick up the pieces of the smashed furniture in her living room.

The family was released without being charged but had to return some weeks later to find out the charges. Meanwhile Argyle Road had had enough of these police operations and formed a defence committee. When the preliminary hearing opened on 3 March a picket outside the court handed out leaflets, and asked passers by to sign a petition demanding an end to police harassment and for the charges to be dropped. People were vociferous in their anger at police brutality. Families crossed the road to sign and wish the protesters well. Many referred to the development of a police state in Britain, and were pleased to see active protest at the racism and unprovoked harassment of black people.

The picket even gained the attention of the police 'community relations' man who was sent packing!

The hearing has been adjourned to 27 June when another picket will be held.

Sheila Marston



● **HEADLINE** *The Guardian*, 1 March, 'Police with guns smash way into pensioners' flat'. Three pensioners, including a 90 year-old woman, were held at gunpoint by West Midlands detectives who smashed their way into a Dudley flat. 64-year-old Mr Denis Elcock was forced out of bed at gunpoint, then held spreadeagled across the bed before being forced out of the house and escorted to the police station. Only after some hours questioning did he convince his captors that he was not responsible for a series of armed robberies!

● **HEADLINE** *The Times*, 3 March, 'My officers not cowboys, Chief Constable says.' Sir Philip Knight, Chief Constable of West Midlands police tells the police committee that his force 'were not a lot of cowboys smashing their way into premises waving guns like lollipops.' He refuses to meet in full the Elcock family's claim for damages for the destruction of their home.

● **HEADLINE** *The Guardian*, 5 March, 'Rude awakening for grandmother after police raid'. Just after midnight 12 West Midlands drug squad detectives and customs men broke into the Solihull flat of 77 year-old Mrs Isabel Wilson — they found no illegal drugs. Sir Philip Knight dismounts from his horse, adjusts his holster, and tells reporters that, 'whatever the impression...'

● **HEADLINE** *The Guardian*, 11 March, 'Police raids on homes lead to walkout at BL'. Storemen at British Leyland's Longbridge plant claim they are being harassed by the police after raids on their homes, and 200 men walk out in sympathy. It is revealed that earlier in the year a storeman was visited by police, taken to the police station, and later had to be treated in hospital for facial injuries. Sir Philip Knight ducks behind the nearest cactus.

● **HEADLINE** *Daily Mirror*, 7 March, 'police beat me up says granny, 73'. But this time it is the Liverpool police who were caught smashing up homes, and they too have a liking for beating up defenceless pensioners. Police slapped and punched 73 year-old Harriet Mellor after breaking into her Edge Hill home, and dragged her off to a panda car. Mrs Mellor said, 'there were two policemen looking for my daughter who had not paid a motoring fine. One of them punched a hole through the glass and burst in. He slapped me across the face, swore, and said I was nicked.' Mrs Mellor later received hospital treatment for shock and facial cuts and bruises.

● **HEADLINE** *News Line*, 18 March 'Police smash door and ransack home'. A 15 year-old black schoolgirl, Janet, was on her way to answer the door when three police smashed it down and burst into the Paddington house. They demanded to know where her brother Franklin was, found him in his bedroom, hauled him out of bed and handcuffed him while still naked. The police accused the youth of possession of stolen goods, which he denied, and proceeded to ransack the house. Even though the police found nothing they insisted on dragging Franklin off to the police station.

● **Headline** *Newsline* 26 March 'Home wrecked in Midlands police raid'. On 23 March 390 cops raided a house in Wolverhampton, smashing the front door and beating 19 year old Keith Hudson. 6 people arrested were released without charge.

NOTES & COMMENTS

■ Cheap labour — cheap lives

When the Youth Opportunities Scheme was launched two years ago it had a double value for the ruling class. It provided cheap non-unionised labour which could be dismissed after a year. Youngsters are earning £25 for a 40 hour week. In most cases no 'training' is involved and boys have found themselves in packing and warehousing work while many girls have been scrubbing and cleaning in hospitals, hostels and nurseries.

The second advantage to the state was that it staved off the immediate impact of unemployment for many youngsters and gave the illusion that the system is 'concerned'.

Now the price of this vicious scheme is being made clear in the statistics that are beginning to emerge. In the past 2 years 5,000 YOP youngsters have been injured at work, eleven have died and forty three have lost limbs. The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education is about to produce a report containing even more horrifying figures. What a price to pay for being young and unemployed!

Sue Davidson

■ Education. Schools under attack

In the last Labour government's final year, £500 million more was spent on education than on defence. By 1985 the present government plans to spend £4,000m less on education than on defence. And yet in the last ten years the number of school children has increased by over one million.

On 23 March the *Daily Mirror* produced a Shock Issue, 'S.O.S. Save Our Schools'. It illustrated how all over Britain there are schools that need rebuilding, that are overcrowded, that lack books and materials, that are cutting subjects out of the syllabus.

As we would expect most of these schools are in poor rural areas, the decaying inner cities and the dying areas of traditional industry. But other schools in other areas which have up till this time experienced only the post-war boom in educational expenditure, are feeling as never before the reality of the capitalist welfare state.

Only last month the government Low Pay Unit reported that a third of Britain's adult workforce — more than 6m people — earn below the official low pay guideline of £90 a week. The terrible conditions and pay of these workers serves as a reminder of what the schools system has meant for the last 40 years. It has never been adequate. It has always been designed to furnish a reserve pool of cheap, unskilled and unemployed labour. As Sir Angus Maude MP, Tory expert in education, was quoted in *The Teacher*

'It has always been far too expensive to improve the educational standards of working class children significantly.'

Under capitalist crisis and rampant British militarism, there is even less chance.

Sue Davidson

■ Miners vote no

As speculation in the press increases over the appointment of 70 year old Ian MacGregor as head of the National Coal Board, Mrs Thatcher cannot conceal her delight at the result of the recent miners' strike ballot and the so-called humiliation of Arthur Scargill. On 10 March it became clear that miners had voted 3-2 against the prospect of a national strike over pit closures. It is significant that this result should come precisely at the moment when MacGregor, who has thrown half of Britain's steelworkers on to the dole, is debating whether to turn his attention to the miners.

Unease amongst sections of miners over impending pit closures came to the fore initially at the end of last year when a number of miners occupied Kinneil colliery in Scotland over Christmas. NUM policy is committed to strike action over all pit closures,

except in the case of exhaustion of coal, and bitterness was engendered therefore when an all-Scotland delegate conference voted against taking strike action. There is no doubt that certain coalfields are being deliberately run down in favour of new, highly mechanised pits or open mines where productivity is much higher. This is the case at Ty-Mawr Lewis Merthyr pit in South Wales where an occupation took place for a number of days at the end of February this year. The NCB has slowed down investment and now can state that the pit is 'uneconomic'. When it became clear that miners from this pit would only displace workers at other pits when Ty-Mawr Merthyr was closed down and that, in addition, South Wales union leaders had been told of 11 definite and 12 possible pit closures out of 33, an all-out strike rapidly occurred throughout South Wales.

Responding to this rank and file pressure, Arthur Scargill began to talk of a national strike, and, briefly, it seemed that this might be the case. However, as an increasing number of areas called for a ballot, the prospect receded. 3 miners in every 5 did not heed Scargill's warning: 'It's now or never. We either fight — or follow the steelworkers to the slaughterhouse.' There is no doubt that the existence of 4m unemployed workers and the inopportune timing of the possible strike — at the end of winter with large stockpiles of coal — affected the miners' decision. But the most significant factor must be the series of recent defeats imposed on the labour movement by their very own leaders — the train drivers, the health workers and even, to a certain extent, the water workers. Under such circumstances those miners not immediately threatened by pit closures are afraid to put their jobs, living standards and mortgages at risk.

Jane Wright

■ An RCP/IFM free zone

Where were the RCP/IFM on Thursday 17 March between 4 and 5pm? Daily anti-PTA vigils outside the Henry Moore Art Gallery in Leeds were advertised in the *next step*. This was in support of their campaign to make West Yorkshire a PTA-Free Zone.

FRFI supporters arrived to find the area deserted. Despite the IFMs claims that it has no other interests apart from that of Irish Freedom and the liberation of the working class, the IFM could not even mobilise itself, let alone other forces for the vigil on St Patrick's Day. The RCP/IFMs only interest is to build their own sectarian organisation from the struggles of oppressed people. The RCP does not even deserve contempt. They bring shame to the Irish cause and the name of communists.

Eileen Griffin and Garvey Harris

■ French socialism

The 'brilliant' achievements of 'French socialism' are truly outstanding. Unemployment continues to rise above 2 million, the attack on living standards and social services continues to grow and the government is now calling for more sacrifices (from the workers of course). The General Secretary of the 'Socialist Party' recently declared that there are other methods of putting the economy on its feet than by turning the screw on wages. True... there's always the truncheon, and the government has not hesitated to savagely attack strikes in the steel and car industries. It has heaped racist abuse on immigrant workers at Citroën, calling them 'Islamic Fanatics'. Meanwhile, the French middle class socialists (suffering from the same insanity as their English counterparts) are still telling any workers backward enough to listen, not to lose faith in the 'progressive' 'socialist' government!

The lessons of 'French Socialism' are clear: the imperialist system cannot be reformed; it can only be destroyed.

David Jackson

■ Prison strike

Over 650 prisoners in Britain's high security gaols were on strike for two days on 28 February and 1 March in support of demands which include the right to wear their own clothes, weekly visits and 50% remission — in line with prisoners in the north of Ireland. Despite the immense difficulties in communication, co-ordination and organisation, the prisoners' determination and ingenuity resulted in strike action in Parkhurst, Albany, Wakefield, Gartree, Hull and Long Lartin prisons.

The strength of the strike by the oppressed in prison took both prison authorities and the bourgeois media by surprise. To conceal the real cause of the strike, the bourgeois media concocted conspiracy theories. Both the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, displaying their usual contempt for the oppressed, 'blamed' the strike on 'outside agitators'. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, the prison strike was 'orchestrated by a left wing newspaper...' and the 'protest started when the newspaper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*... called for a two day strike...'. This is an old story for the gullible, the reactionary and the malevolent. The prisoners, apparently, are unable to organise their own strike. The media would have us believe that the prisoners are quite contented with their lot — that they do not care about the murder of Barry Prosser, or about the brutal use of drugs, the overcrowding, the arbitrary rule of prison warders and countless other abuses which make prisons hell holes. But for 'outside agitators' the prisoners would be as passive as newborn lambs. This same reactionary drive appeared when black and white youth fought back against police oppression in the Uprisings of 1981 and always appears when workers wage determined struggles to defend their living standards.

FRFI, having exposed the brutal conditions existing in British prisons knows full well that the oppressed in prison are increasingly determined to fight against this murder machine. FRFI has no need to 'orchestrate' strikes and struggles. The prisoners themselves have organised and fought and will continue to fight. In their struggles they will have the full support of FRFI, whose task it is to spread the truth about prison conditions and build wide support for smashing Britain's racist and reactionary prison system.

Eddie Abrahams

■ Irish POWs transferred

In FRFI 27 we reported that Irish POWs Eddie O'Neill, John McCluskey and Dickie Glenholmes were transferred from Hull prison under the notorious GOD (Good Order and Discipline) rule to prevent them from speaking to a BBC TV crew filming in the prison. The prison censorship machine has gone into action again. Irish POWs Bobby Campbell and Paul Hill have been transferred from Parkhurst to Winchester where they are being subjected to 23 hour lock-up, again under the GOD rule. The reason for the move — another camera crew is filming in Parkhurst.

Bobby Campbell, in a letter to his wife published in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (24 March 1983) explains:

'The authorities here see me as a threat politically, especially after my letter appeared in *API/RN* calling for anti-imperialist groups in Britain to unite.'

When word leaked out in Parkhurst that a television crew was coming, a lot of the prisoners asked me and other political prisoners what was the best way to get across to concerned people outside what was going on in these prisons. The authorities know that the Irish political prisoners are respected among the prison population and this was another reason for the move.'

No doubt the film crew in Parkhurst, as with the BBC crew in Hull, will raise no protest whatever against this gross and obvious prison censorship.

Terry Marlowe

■ Sinn Fein wins local by-election

On Tuesday 22 March, Sinn Fein won a massive victory in the Carrickmore, County Tyrone by-elections. The Sinn Fein candidate Seamus Kerr won 2,289 of the 4,093 valid votes. Working class support for Sinn Fein annihilated all opposition. The SDLP received 654 votes, the Irish Independence Party, which won the 1981 election, a derisory 123 and the Stickies masquerading as the Workers Party got 120 votes and lost their deposit. This affirmation of working class support for Sinn Fein's anti-imperialist armed struggle was noted by an Irish Times journalist who comparing Sinn Fein and the SDLP said it was 'youth versus middle age, working class versus middle class and enthusiasm versus weariness.'

■ Conspiracy charges thrown out — no case to answer

On Tuesday 8 March the Victoria 12 trial concluded in total victory for the ASTMS members and complete embarrassment for Fife's Chief Constable and Health Board. The Victoria 12 are workers whose laboratory sit-in on 25 September last year was broken up in a major raid by 30 police. The women workers were stripped and their bras and tights removed; all 12 were held until well into the next day. They were brought to Court charged under a 108 year-old Act — the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875. The Sheriff did not even need to hear the defence case before having to dismiss the charges.

This successful legal victory follows that of the Plessey women in Bathgate last year when by sheer determination they won a reversal against the injunction ordering them to quit their occupation of the factory. Both cases show that determined and organised defence can successfully resist attacks on democratic rights.

Gerald Cameron

■ Lygate Campaign Success — Parole Granted

The Free Matt Lygate Campaign has won a notable success with the setting of a parole date — 19 September 1983 — for Scotland's most famous political prisoner, Matt Lygate who has served 11 1/4 years of a 24 year sentence. The normal sentence on a charge of bank robbery is 6 to 8 years. On top of the extraordinarily long sentence given to Matt for being a political activist his previous parole applications have been vindictively slapped down without explanation. However this time a determined and broadly based campaign involving family, Scottish Republicans, GIFAC, RCG and Labour Party members has kept Matt's case out in the open and threatened to escalate in the event of refusal. Knowing that a march from Edinburgh City Centre past the Law Courts and out to Saughton Prison was coming off within 3 weeks, the prison authorities on 7 March finally gave Matt official notice of his parole date.

Paul Whittaker

■ Gaoled for whispering

Did you know that if a magistrate does not like the look of you as you sit in the public gallery whispering or coughing or expressing some feeling — he can put you away for up to a month? Or fine you £500? Or both?

Michael O'Farrell did not know this, or perhaps he would not have whispered to his friends in Clerkenwell court on 18th March. Mr Mark Romer, the magistrate, thought he'd try himself out. 'Take that man in the red shirt to the cells' he proclaimed. And they did. Brought back into court a little later he heard the magistrate declare him guilty of contempt of court and sentence him to 7 days in prison. He started to request leave to appeal but the magistrate would hear none of it, and prison it was. No trial. No solicitor. No rights.

Sheila Marston

Imperialists, hands off Korea!

On the Korean peninsula, strategically situated in North East Asia, the air is acrid with the stench of gunpowder and war clouds are darkening the skies. On 1 February the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army announced:

'... the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army issued Order No 001 dated 1 February 1983 to the entire units of the Korean People's Army, all the members of the Korean People's Security Forces, the Worker-Peasant Red Guards and the Young Red Guards to enter into a semi-war state from February 1 to mid-April, the period of the enemy's joint military exercise.'

The above quoted statement detailed the enormous imperialist threat that has demanded such a firm response:

'The US imperialists, together with the south Korean puppet clique, are staging a joint military exercise called "Team Spirit 83", the largest in scale in its annual series, with the whole area of south Korea as the main theatre in the period from 1 February to the middle of April.'

According to an announcement of the enemy, army units... will come to south Korea to participate in the "Team Spirit 83" joint military exercise and more than 70,000 soldiers of the US imperialist aggression forces will stage together with the south Korean puppet army a gamble of three-dimensional invading operation with large combat forces. Mobilised there are all the ultra-modern means of war such as various types of warships including the "Enterprise", the biggest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier of the US 7th Fleet, and various kinds of planes, missiles, artillery and tanks.'

NO IDLE THREAT

The threat posed by US imperialism to socialist Korea is no idle one. On the conclusion of the Second World War, the United States occupied the southern part of Korea and turned it into a neo-colony, whilst the liberated north took the socialist road. In 1950, scheming to conquer the whole of Korea, US forces crossed the Military Demarcation Line

at Panmunjom and invaded the North. The war that was to be fought over the next three years was one of the most bestial in the history of imperialism. An American historian, Hershel D Meyer, has written,

'During the three years and one month of the Korea war the US imperialists dropped on the small area of north Korea as much tonnage of bombs as they had dropped on Pacific countries during the three years and eight months of the Pacific War. It far exceeded that dropped on Germany during World War II.'

In the capital city of Pyongyang, it was literally the case that not a building was left standing. Eventually the US stopped the bombing—because there was nothing left to bomb. As O'Donnell, Commander of the US Air Force said at 'The MacArthur Hearings' on 25 June 1951, '...nothing worth mentioning remains intact.' Napalm was extensively employed, and internationally respected scientists, such as Dr Joseph Needham of Cambridge University attested to the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons in Korea and north east China. Despite this, the Korean people fought back, relying mainly on their own efforts, but with support from the socialist countries—particularly from the Chinese People's Volunteers—and inflicted a major defeat on US imperialism.

Since that time, the Korean people have endured the national humiliation of partition and south Korea remains permanently occupied by 52,000 US troops.

ONE NATION - TWO WORLDS

The South of Korea is a hellhole of misery and oppression for workers and the oppressed. In 1977, the Fine Instruments Centre boasted in a 'Guide to Electronics Industry Investment in Korea',

'The average wage of Korean workers

is reportedly 1/5 that of their Japanese counterparts, and 1/15 that of US workers... As of March 1977... 85% (of workers) fell below the recommended "minimum" living standard.'

Between 1970 and 1976, industrial disabilities increased 2.7 times. In 1973, 840 workers died in industrial 'accidents'. By 1976, the figure was 887. In the Masan Free Export Zone there are 4,500 accidents every year. This amounts to 19% of the 24,000 workers. On 13 February 1976, the *International Herald Tribune* reported that in south Korea a 7-day, 84-hour working week is not uncommon. A 'Guide to Investment in Korea' states that the normal working week is 60 hours. By contrast, in socialist Korea, from nothing but destruction an advanced and modern socialist state has been built. The 8-hour day (40-hour week) is enshrined in law. There is a completely free medical service with (as of December 1979) two doctors and twelve hospital beds per 1,000 of population. In south Korea, only 24% of the population have any form of medical insurance whatsoever. In 1975, socialist Korea introduced universal compulsory 11-year education. In south Korea, the standard period of education is only 6 years, but countless children are forced to become beggars or child prostitutes and never see the inside of a school building.

The misery of the people in south Korea naturally has its corollary in the massive profits wrung from the blood and sweat of the people by the US and other imperialists. The removal of any threat to their predatory activities, and if possible their extension, is the goal of the US war moves.

JAPANESE IMPERIALISM

In this goal they are joined by other imperialist powers, particularly the Japanese. Last summer, a furor was raised throughout East Asia (particularly in socialist China) when the Japanese Ministry of Education revised school history text books to describe Japan's invasion of its neighbours in the 1930s as an 'advance'. Not only was this an affront to the Asian peoples who suffered so bitterly under the heel of Japanese imperialism during that period, they also rightly saw it as being a reflection of a new aggressiveness on the part of Japan, where the growing strength of Japanese monopoly capitalism in the imperialist world is once again raising the spectre of overseas expansion. In the autumn of last year, a new government was formed under the Prime Ministership of Nakasone. This government is widely considered to be the most reactionary and jingoistic Japanese government since World War II. Shortly after assuming office, Nakasone visited Washington

but first he went to the south Korean capital of Seoul where he promised 'security aid' for 1983 in the region of 5,000 million US dollars. All this has raised in Asia the fear of a new aggressive axis of the United States and Japan together with their south Korean puppet.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM

British imperialism played a full part in the aggressive war of 1950-1953. To this day it maintains a military foothold in Korea with a token occupation garrison of 30 troops, refuses to recognise the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (socialist Korea) and tries to isolate it in every way.

However, socialist Korea is by no means isolated. Particularly in the Third World and the socialist countries, its self-reliant development and resolute anti-imperialist stand has won many friends. A number of revolutionary states, such as Guinea-Bissau and the People's Republic of Benin, have even said that should war break out in Korea they will send volunteers to fight alongside their Korean comrades. Communists in Britain join this world-wide movement of solidarity and demand:

**IMPERIALISTS OUT OF ASIA!
HANDS OFF KOREA!**

Keith Anderson

GRENADA

Following the imperialists' failure to undermine revolutionary Grenada at the Caricom Conference held in Jamaica at the end of last year (see FRFI 27) they are resorting to open military threats. This March and April a huge fleet of seventy-seven imperialist vessels, including ten British warships headed by HMS Invincible will take part in Operation Readex in Caribbean waters. This is part of a world-wide mobilisation against revolutionary governments and movements spearheaded by over 1,500 US overseas bases, many supported by British troop units, backed up by a mounting series of military exercises stretching from the Caribbean and Central America to the Middle East, Indian Ocean and Korea.

US Admiral James Watkins stated that the Caribbean manoeuvres were 'a signal to the Soviet Union that, together with our allies, we have the means to protect vital sea routes in the area'. The US imperialists claim that the international airport being built in Grenada is really intended as a base for Soviet bombers. The truth is that the achievements of 110,000 Grenadians since overthrowing the corrupt imperialist stooge Gairy in 1979 are themselves a threat to capitalist interests in the region. One third of Caribbean and Latin American people live in abject poverty and hunger. The imperialist crisis is flinging hundreds of thousands of Caribbean people into squalor: farmers are unable to sell their crops, workers are begging, women are selling their blood and bodies to try and survive. On US occupied Puerto Rico, which the imperialists hold up as a model for other Caribbean islands to emulate, official unemployment has reached a record 25.3%, bankruptcies doubled in number last year, and output has shrunk by 10% over the past two years. Meanwhile, in revolutionary Grenada investment in manufacture, fishing and construction rose in 1982 by a magnificent 15% and the economy grew by 5.5%. Hunger and degradation are eliminated in Grenada; that is why US President Reagan calls Grenada a 'virus' spreading Marxism to



its neighbours, and why Cuban President Fidel Castro says the Grenadian people have made '... a big revolution on a small island'.

In March the Washington Post confirmed reports that the CIA had drawn up a campaign in 1981 of economic and propaganda sabotage to bring down the Grenadan government. It detailed minutes of the National Security Council proposing 'unilateral paramilitary action against special Cuban targets'. In response the US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defence, Nestor Sanchez, made the incredible accusation that Grenada contained a military camp 'and a training area with a Soviet-style obstacle course'!

Such menacing developments have been noted by the Grenadian people.

They have declared 1983 'The Year of Political and Academic Education'. But this they do not mean the creation of a tiny clique of imperialist lackeys, as in education in the oppressed islands; the Grenadians are guided by their revolutionary slogan 'Education for People's Power, Production and Defence'. In the words of General Hudson Austin of the People's Revolutionary Armed Forces Grenadians 'must firmly grasp the relationship between the international crisis in capitalism and the stepped up military aggression of imperialism... as our revolution continues to grow in 1983 and as our working people's revolutionary democracy becomes more consolidated, US imperialism, led by Reagan and his mad neutron gang, will continue to oppose our process. Make no mistake about it, imperialism's aggression towards us and all progressive countries, will not disappear (in 1983). As the economic crisis worsens its war mongering will increase'.

Over the next five years US capitalism now intends to spend a staggering US\$1 trillion on weapons. One US arm expert bragged 'We're not going to spend all this money on the military and then keep it parked in the garage'. While imperialism prepares new wars to prolong its blood drenched life and this predatory armada is visible from its shores, Grenada shows us the way to deal with this beast: even while struggling to overcome the inheritance of poverty bequeathed by British colonialism the Grenadians have linked arms with and provided money and essential goods to the fighting people of El Salvador, Angola, Namibia and Palestine.

**Hands off Grenada!
Forward Ever - Backward
Never!**

Trevor Rayne

Nicaragua under attack

On Monday 21 March, Nicaraguan Defence Minister Humberto Ortega announced a major counter-revolutionary attack against Nicaragua by 1,200 US-armed ex-Somoza national guards. 1,000 were attacking from the northern mountains in Jinotega and Nueva Segovia provinces and another 200 had been dropped into central Matagalpa by Honduran supplied aircraft. After 4 years of political, economic and military efforts to undermine the revolution, imperialism has now launched its most serious offensive yet against Nicaragua.

The base from which the counter-revolutionaries organise and prepare is Honduras where the largest ever body of CIA agents finance, train and advise Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries organised in the so-called Nicaraguan Democratic Front. The Front in reality is a collection of Nicaraguan capitalists and landlords whose property was confiscated by the Nicaraguan people. The force currently attacking Nicaragua is apparently being commanded by Augusto Calero, a landowner whose land has been confiscated by the people of Nicaragua.

These attacks follow rapidly upon the

February joint US/Honduran military exercises on Nicaragua's borders and are geared to preparing a full scale Honduran invasion of the country. Humberto Ortega, commenting on the current fighting said:

'North American imperialism wants all of this to culminate in a war with the army of Honduras. These are very dangerous steps. Our tanks, our planes, our army will defeat them.'

Imperialist Hands Off Nicaragua!

Eddie Abrahams

if you wa FIGHT IMP

The imperialists hypocritically pretend to support peace, yet throughout the world they butcher the oppressed – in Ireland and El Salvador; in Palestine and South Africa; in the Falklands/Malvinas. Imperialism has ensured that the world has become a slaughter-house. This century imperialism has forced upon us two world wars and hundreds of colonial wars – quite apart from the daily butchery by the exploiting classes, everywhere struggling to maintain their rule against the rightful anger of the risen people. Imperialism needs war to maintain its exploitation, to safeguard its profits, to protect its investments: imperialism and war are inseparable. And so, as its power to exploit is threatened, imperialism grows more aggressive.

The imperialists have a particular hatred for the socialist countries where the oppressed people have thrown out imperialism, put an end to exploitation, misery and want, and set about laying the basis for a truly free society – free from oppression, unemployment, starvation, disease, illiteracy, racism and sexism. The imperialists sense that their brutal wars of oppression are only a

doomed rearguard action, and that the relentless advances of national liberation struggles and the consolidation of the socialist countries will end in the death of imperialism. Ever since the October Revolution, the imperialists have done everything possible to undermine and overthrow socialism. Between 1918 and 1922, 8 million died during the imperialist invasion of Soviet Russia; a

further 20 million lost their lives in the Soviet Union following the Nazi invasion in 1941. The people of Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and Angola too have suffered barbaric imperialist butchery designed to halt the advance of socialism and national liberation.

The imperialists have long yearned to annihilate socialism, and when they developed the atom bomb, it seemed at last that they had the power to do so. Just before the bomb was dropped on Japan, Prime Minister Winston Churchill was already enthusing at the opportunities now open:

'The secret of this explosive and the power to use it would completely alter the equilibrium which was adrift since the defeat of Germany. Now we had a new value which redressed our position... now we could say, "If you insist on doing this or that, well... And then where are the Russians!"'

US imperialism's military power

The United States has 2,500 military bases or installations in 110 countries. More than half a million troops are permanently deployed abroad, whilst the Rapid Deployment Force of 300,000 troops is earmarked for operations outside the US. This means that more than 40 per cent of all US troops are specifically assigned to tasks outside the US. Some 12,000 nuclear warheads, a third of the US arsenal are stationed outside the US – 7,000 in Western Europe; 1,800 in Asia; and 2,500-2,800 on ships of the Atlantic and Pacific fleet.

Nor were the British alone in preparing to atomise their erstwhile ally. In the United States, less than three months after the first atom bomb had been dropped on Japan, the US Joint Intelligence Committee in its document 329 of 3 November 1945 had selected 20 Soviet cities with a total population of 13 million, for strategic atomic bombing. The document clinically noted the advantages of atomic weaponry as instruments of mass murder:

'The ability of the atomic weapon to destroy concentrations of personnel is one of its outstanding features and should therefore be exploited if possible in conjunction with other effects.'

US imperialism planned to take over where the Nazis left off in their crusade

against Communism.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff had already argued for the need to launch an unprovoked attack on the Soviet Union, if its armed forces seemed to endanger the United States:

'we cannot afford, through any perilous idea of avoiding an aggressive attitude, to permit the first blow to be struck against us. Our government,

Dig a hole, cover it with a couple of three feet of dirt on top... It's thick enough shovels to go around, even T K Jones, US Deputy Under Secretary and Theatre Nuclear Forces

under such conditions, should press the issue to a prompt political decision, while making all preparations to strike the first blow if necessary.'

These plans, which relied on the connivance of Britain and other imperialist countries, grew in barbarity and sophistication, including plans for US occupation policy after the anticipated victory. In NSC document 20/1 of 18 August 1948, the Policy Planning Staff wrote:

'we will be faced with the problem of the human remnants of the Soviet apparatus of power.

... the problem of dealing with it would be a relatively simple one; for we would only need to give the neces-

ATOMISING INDOCHINA

3. Assuming the Chinese Communists intervene...
 - a. Employing atomic weapons, whenever advantageous, as well as other weapons, conduct offensive air operations against selected military targets in Indochina...
9. Assuming Chinese Communists do not intervene...
 - a. Conduct air operations in support of allied forces in Indochina. The employment of atomic weapons is contemplated in the event that such course appears militarily advantageous.

Memorandum from Admiral Arthur W Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to US Secretary of Defense Charles E Wilson, May 26 1954

LABOUR'S NUCLEAR RECORD

Actions speak louder than words – and nowhere louder than over Labour's hypocrisy on nuclear weapons. While the Labour Party supports unilateral nuclear disarmament on paper, its whole history is one of complete support for imperialism in deeds and total implication in the British nuclear weapons program. Since 1945 Labour governments have sent British troops to gun down the people of Ireland, Vietnam, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Aden, Korea and many other countries. Labour took power in 1945 before the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima – Prime Minister Attlee knew of the decision in advance and approved it.

It was a Labour government which decided in 1947 to build the first British bomb, secretly spending more than £100m. It also awarded contracts to develop the nuclear V bombers and began related guided weapons research. It signed contracts for uranium supplies with fascist Portugal, racist South Africa and colonialist Belgium. It was the Labour government which helped found the anti-socialist NATO alliance in 1949.

When out of power, Labour usually feigns opposition to Tory policy, but when the Conservative government proposed to develop the Hydrogen bomb in 1955, the Labour Party gave them its support.

When another Labour government came to power in 1964, it confirmed the decision to acquire Polaris submarines – a policy it had attacked, of course, in opposition. Its wholehearted commitment to nuclear weapons was shown by its initiation of an important warhead improvement programme at Aldermaston in 1967. This programme came to fruition in early 1974, under another Labour government which took the secret decision to go ahead with the Chevaline warhead enhancement programme, costing £1000m. It was clear by this time that Polaris was obsolete, and that a replacement was needed. From 1967 onwards, Labour placed a series of con-

tracts to investigate the feasibility of replacing the British Polaris with cruise missiles.

Labour's supposed opposition to the siting of US cruise and Pershing missiles in Britain is also hypocrisy. In December 1978 the Labour inner Cabinet reached a consensus that NATO must deploy new long range weapons – a decision which paved the way for the cruise/Pershing deployment.

It is true, however, that Labour opposes the replacement of Polaris missiles with Trident – but only on grounds of cost! It is worried that there won't be enough money to spend on colonial wars to defend British imperialism's interests outside Europe:

The Opposition spokesman accused the Defence Secretary Mr John Nott, of putting the Government's whole maritime policy for operations outside NATO at risk by continuing with the Trident nuclear deterrent programme. (Guardian 15.12.82)

Never mind what the Labour Party says – that's just to pull in votes. What matters is what it does – and Labour's record is clear – it is a faithful nuclear armourer for British imperialism.

Steve Palmer



ant peace HT ERIALISM

sary arms and military support to whatever non-Communist Russian authority might control the area and permit that authority to deal with the communist bands through the traditionally thorough procedures of Russian civil war.'

Faced with such threats, the Soviet Union was forced to develop the atomic bomb to defend itself, and the continu-

le of doors and then throw
e dirt that does it... If there are
everybody's going to make it.'
Secretary of Defense for Strategic

ous arms race since then has been a succession of attempts by US imperialism to gain the advantage, forcing the USSR to respond in defence. Today, the arsenals of nuclear weapons are now so enormous that if the imperialists, in their fear and hatred of communism, start a nuclear war to destroy the socialist countries, they will succeed in wiping out the entire human race. This is the brink to which imperialism has brought us and the prospect which awaits us so long as imperialism exists.

Yet the imperialists are preparing such a war. The cruise and Pershing missiles to be deployed in Europe are designed to attack Soviet missile sites. But this only makes sense if delivered while the Soviet missiles are still in their silos: it only makes sense as part of a

plan to launch a first strike against the Soviet Union.

Although the socialist countries are the prime target of imperialist nuclear weaponry, they are not the only ones. The more than 200 threats by the US since 1945 to use nuclear weapons include: ● Yugoslavia in 1946 after a US Air Force plane was shot down over the country ● Uruguay in 1947, when seven nuclear armed B29 bombers were sent to show that the US would oppose 'communist subversions' ● during the Korean war of 1950-53 - General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff revealed that 'We have discussed many times the use of the atomic bomb, tactically, against China as well as in Korea ● in 1954 the US offered France nuclear weapons for use against the

Vietnamese people fighting for their freedom ● Suez in 1956 - the US threatened to use nuclear weapons ● Lebanon 1958 - the 14,000 US troops who invaded the country were armed with Honest John tactical nuclear missiles ● in 1962, the US threatened nuclear war over Cuba ● nuclear attack on Vietnam was again discussed in 1968 ● in 1973 the US put its forces on nuclear combat alert during the Arab-Israeli war ● Iran 1980 - the US drew up plans for a nuclear attack.

The barbaric fascist imperialist mentality which can calmly contemplate a nuclear holocaust, has already brought nuclear death and suffering to the oppressed. US Atomic Energy Commis-

The only factor that has so far restrained the imperialists from wholesale nuclear slaughter of the oppressed is the fear that the Soviet Union might retaliate. Yet, to continue to exploit the world, the imperialists must constantly threaten nuclear war and play a game of brinkmanship. The socialist countries, by contrast, have nothing to gain from the arms race, having no empire to protect. They have none of the colonies, the foreign investments, the massive loans which make up the imperialist spiderweb which straddles the world. All of them have experienced the worst ravages of modern war and want only peace - unlike the bloated privileged imperialist United States.

Q: Do you mean five per cent would survive? Two per cent?
Vice-President George Bush: More than that. If everybody fired everything he had, you'd have more than that survive.'

sion radiation experiments between 1963 and 1973 included experiments on prisoners, including exposure to lethal doses of radiation. The University of Cincinnati conducted lethal radiation experiments on sick people, most of them poor and unable to afford medical treatment. Three quarters were black.

Moreover there is the colossal waste of arms spending in a world where 500m are starving. In 1980 the world's total military spending was equal to the total production of the world's sixty poorest oppressed nations - with a population of 1,550 million. The latest US 'Defense Guidance' has just stepped up US military spending by \$400m - a sum approaching the total wealth of the British economy - to a staggering \$2000m over the next 5 years.

The only way that peace can be preserved is through a relentless struggle against bloodsucking, war-mongering imperialism. The imperialists are trying every means to prevent this, from smooth trickery to outright repression. Their 'negotiations' in Geneva are a phoney political ploy which they will arrange to 'break down', throwing the blame onto the Soviet Union - which has proposed a series of compromises. They are conducting a lying propaganda campaign through their despicable media. And meanwhile they lock up the magnificent Greenham women who refuse to be intimidated by the police or the courts, or to be hijacked by the wretched vote-chasing Labour Party. Yet none of this has stopped the movement from advancing. More and more, the hard core of this movement is joining the fight against imperialist weapons with the fight against the entire imperialist system, linking their struggle with all the other struggles of the poor and oppressed everywhere against imperialism. Anti-imperialists must reach out to these comrades, helping bring closer the day we can all dance on the grave of the butcher Imperialism, enemy of us all.

Steve Palmer

GREENHAM CHALLENGES THE BRITISH LEFT

The US and British imperialists claim that their massive military apparatus is necessary to defend the 'free world'. How fond they are of phrases about democracy and freedom! Yet at every stage, the struggle of the Greenham Common women has exposed the democracy of the imperialists as a sham and a fraud. The Greenham women's protest has been met with censorship, legal trickery, police brutality and imprisonment. So much for Reagan and Thatcher's democracy! It clearly does not include the democratic right to challenge the imperialist war-machine.

The Greenham women's protest has resulted in approximately 185 arrests. Over 70 Greenham women have spent time in gaol for refusing to be 'bound over to keep the peace'. (!). At the same time over 100 people have been arrested at the Upper Heyford Peace Camp and some of them imprisoned. 59 Greenham women were summonsed in the High Court for 'trespassing' on Greenham Common. Another 400 women asked for their names to be added to those of the 59 summonsed for trespassing. The High Court predictably, both heard the case in secret and granted Newbury Council's request for an injunction to stop named women 'trespassing' on Greenham Common. But in the meantime the Greenham women had moved their camp on to a piece of land belonging to the Department of Environment.

The repressive machinery of the British state has so far failed to break the spirit and determination of the peace women. And in the course of their struggle they have exposed the state's repressive apparatus - police, courts and prisons - as the protectors of imperialism and its war-machine. Already many of the women have come to identify their struggle for peace with the struggle of oppressed people against racism and imperialism. When an FRFI supporter went to the women's picket of Holloway prison, the women there enthusiastically took literature about the Colin Roach campaign and talked about the racism faced by the many black prisoners in Holloway Gaol. Some of the Greenham women travelled to Ireland for the International Women's Day protest outside Armagh

gaol. Every major struggle teaches lessons and many supporters of the Greenham protest will recognise that peace can only be achieved and guaranteed when imperialism is destroyed. For that reason and because their cause is a progressive one all genuine socialists will defend and support them.

But the Greenham women's struggle whilst exciting the admiration of thousands (probably millions) of people has, of course, met the usual chorus of 'criticism' from the middle class socialists. The RCP is typical of the most sectarian trend. Their open and chauvinist contempt for the peace women is revealed in the next step which talks of people applauding the women 'whatever garbage they uttered'. A photo of the women is captioned 'Greenham gals go round the outside'. And ignoring the hundreds of arrests they say 'The British Establishment could easily tolerate this sort of stuff'. The SWP has also been particularly vicious and dishonest in its attacks. An article in their theoretical journal *Socialist Review* says:

'Basically peace camps have made people feel guilty. To feel that if you are unwilling to abandon hearth and home for a draughty tent and thermal underwear then your commitment must lack strength. What right have you therefore to criticise? It is the same argument that permeates the left from time to time about the issues of racism and Northern Ireland. If you are not willing to spend your time physically defending Asian families from racial assault, or if you are not



willing to fight above all else to get the Brits out of Ireland then you don't have the moral strength that it takes.'

It is no coincidence that the SWP should thus refer to 'guilty' feelings and its 'right to criticise' the struggle of black people, the Irish people and the Greenham women. All 3 struggles have, in their different ways, challenged British imperialism. It is no surprise therefore that the SWP has attacked and abused all three struggles. Interestingly enough the SWP often criticise the IRA for its militarist tactics - now they are criticising the Greenham women for their non-violence! The SWP's grievance is not about violence or non-violence but that these struggles challenge imperialism and are able to do so because they are not under the domination of the pro-imperialist Labour and Trade Union Movement. Whilst the Trade Union Movement's 'big battalions' (which the

SWP fetishizes to the point of absurdity) are failing to fight the Thatcher government, the oppressed, the black youth, the women and the Irish are fighting back. Yet the SWP consistently argues that the peace campaign must be led by the trade unions.

Not content with such attacks, the SWP further discredits the name of socialism by attending events like the picket of Newbury Magistrates Court and drowning the women's slogans with the best-loved puerile chant of the labour aristocracy 'Maggie, Out!'. They have neither respect nor comradeship to offer the Greenham women - or any other section actually fighting for democracy against imperialism.

Finally, the SWP, as usual, distorts history to defend its sectarian position. In *Socialist Worker* (19 March) there is an article claiming to show the parallels between the Greenham struggle and the Suffragette Movement. The conclusion

is that 'narrow demands' and 'wrong tactics' destroyed the Suffragette Movement - thus implying the same fate for the Greenham women. But to 'prove' this point they concentrate almost exclusively on the bourgeois trend of the Suffragette Movement, led by Emmeline Pankhurst. They refer only briefly to the working class trend led by Sylvia Pankhurst which espoused the struggle of the poorest working-class women and most significantly of the Irish people. An open split between these trends finally took place in 1913 when Sylvia was expelled from the Women's Social and Political Union precisely for her defence of the Irish people. She had risked arrest to speak at a mass rally in the Albert Hall protesting against the imprisonment of the Irish socialist, Jim Larkin.

The SWP article begs the main question - would socialists prior to 1913 have supported and defended the cause of the Suffragettes. Of course they would. And they would (as Sylvia Pankhurst did) have done their utmost to encourage the women's movement to take the side of the oppressed. Yet today, prior to any such clear-cut split, the SWP is busy attacking and criticising the women's peace movement.

The fact that a real struggle involving tens of thousands of women (many of them new to the anti-war movement) is taking place is of no interest to the sectarian middle class socialists of the SWP. In contrast, genuine socialists will defend the Greenham Common women against the state's attacks and will applaud and encourage every step they take which brings them closer to the anti-imperialist camp.

Maxine Williams

The Battle of Beirut: why Israel invaded Lebanon Michael Jansen, Zed Press, £4.50

The Israeli government, the fascist Lebanese Phalange and US imperialism are currently negotiating to establish a stable pro-imperialist state in Lebanon. Michael Jansen's book is a timely reminder that these negotiations were only made possible by the unremitting savagery of the June 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

The facts and information gathered in *The Battle of Beirut* show how in June 1982, Zionism resorted to mass murder and huge physical destruction to force the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Lebanese revolutionary forces out of South Lebanon and Beirut. 12,000 people were killed, 40,000 wounded, 300,000 made homeless, 100,000 literally left without shelter and hundreds of thousands left destitute as Israeli, US and British supplied guns destroyed factories, offices, homes, schools, hospitals, whole villages and refugee camps. For weeks on end West Beirut was blockaded by Israeli forces and subjected to remorseless bombardment; its 500,000 inhabitants were denied food, water, electricity and urgently needed medical supplies. When the PLO finally evacuated Beirut in August 1982, the Zionist state in alliance with Lebanese fascist forces wreaked bloody revenge, murdering 2000 now defenceless and unarmed civilians in Beirut's Sabra and Chatila camps.

The heroic 8-week-long resistance of the PLO and Lebanese revolutionary movement tended to conceal the massive inequality in military strength between the PLO forces and the Zionist state. But the struggle was truly one between a David and a Goliath. According to Israeli sources, the PLO fielded no more than 8,000 fighters, 35 T-35 Soviet tanks and a 'large number of artillery pieces'. In contrast, the imperialist built Israeli war machine consisted of 172,000 soldiers, 3,500 tanks (equal to the combined strength of the German, French and Italian armed forces), nearly 1,100 artillery pieces, 602 combat aircraft and supplies of deadly phosphorous, cluster and other bombs. In addition Israel used its modern and sophisticated navy. The PLO, of course, has neither airforce nor navy.

Yet to force the relatively weak PLO out of South Lebanon and Beirut, Israel resorted to mass slaughter and genocide. The reasons for this are twofold. The PLO, despite its relative military inferiority, is a revolutionary army of the Palestinian masses. It is based in Palestinian camps, ghettos and slums and enjoys the unyielding support and loyalty of the Palestinian people. To defeat a revolutionary army which is an integral part of a revolutionary movement, imperialism has first to terrorise and slaughter the people. This is what imperialism, with its infinitely superior military power, is attempting to do in Ireland, El Salvador, Guatemala and Southern Africa. Without the mass murder it committed, the Israeli forces would not have been able to force the PLO out of South Lebanon and Beirut. Secondly, as Michael Jansen shows, the Israeli government hoped by means of terror and slaughter to force a massive migration of Palestinians from Lebanon dispersing them further away from their homelands.



The Battle of Beirut is a valuable summary of Zionism's brutal war against the Lebanese and Palestinian masses. Quoting newspapers, documents and statistics, she shows the calculated and pre-determined terror strategy of Zionism. She also demonstrates that the current Israeli attempts to foist on the Lebanese masses a pro-imperialist government and Israeli hopes of permanently annexing portions of South Lebanon have been long standing ambitions of the Zionist state. The book's main weakness is its failure to explain why imperialism uncompromisingly supported the Zionist butchery. The scale of US duplicity and hypocrisy is exposed, as is US imperialism's consistent financial and military support for Israel. But she does not explain the relation of the Zionist state to imperialism—namely that it is a direct agent of imperialism in the Middle East, used to crush revolutionary movements in the region. For example, just before the June 1982 invasion, the Palestinian revolution was taking massive strides forward. Tens of thousands of people on the occupied West Bank were taking to the streets and beginning a process of insurrection against Israeli annexationist designs. The development of this movement and its closer unity with the armed PLO in Lebanon would have threatened not only Zionism, but all imperialist economic, military and political interests in the region. Israel intervened to halt this process, and

REVIEWS

received imperialism's consistent support.

But imperialism's satisfaction at the PLO's departure from Beirut will be short-lived. Already PLO and Lebanese revolutionary forces have reorganised and begun systematic guerrilla war in South Lebanon and Beirut. And the Palestinian and Lebanese masses will not forever tolerate the iron heel of Israeli occupation. They too will rise again and united with their armed vanguard will challenge Zionism and imperialism in the name of democracy and self-determination.

Eddie Abrahams

Brazil: State and Struggle Bernado Kucinski, Latin America Bureau, £2.50

This is a survey of recent Brazilian political history, written by the *Guardian's* Brazilian correspondent. The book recounts the popular struggles preceding the 1930 Vargas dictatorship, the vacillations of the subsequent period of parliamentary rule, and the repression under the military dictatorship which seized power in 1964. Civil rights were withdrawn, and



repression of the working class and student movement was intensified. As working class and student struggles intensified into guerrilla warfare, police torture and assassination increased. Wages were driven down as workers' organisations were smashed and as thousands of rural workers, driven off the land, flocked to the major cities. This repression and immiseration encouraged foreign investment, and Brazil experienced a 'miracle' of economic growth which doubled the size of the working class.

The oil crisis of the early '70s hit the Brazilian economy, undermining growth and creating a balance of payments deficit which has been financed ever since by borrowing. Today these foreign debts threaten to drag down the imperialist banks together with the crisis-ridden Brazilian economy. From this time too, popular opposition emerged from all sections, spreading wider and deeper. The middle class, the workers, the peasants, the students, the slum-dwellers, the church—all showed increasing opposition to the dictatorship. While all these varieties of opposition are mentioned, Kucinski concentrates on the working class, seeing great hope in the struggles of the metalworkers in the Sao Paulo region who launched militant strikes in support of pay increases. Out of these struggles has grown the PT—the so-called Workers Party, which Kucinski clearly favours.

Yet this PT and its basis are far from being a force which is going to lead a revolution in Brazil. As Kucinski notes 'this huge mass of workers on the new production lines, including unskilled workers, was better paid than the rest of the working class in Brazil. In the big car factories half the workers earned between three and five times the national minimum wage; only 5 per cent earned the minimum wage' (p67). The demands of this part of the working class were purely sectional and economic, not political. When other opposition political parties urged the PT to ally with them to turn the November elections into a referendum on the government, the PT declined. In the event it polled a mere 1.4m of the 21m opposition votes, and some of its own supporters clearly voted for other opposition parties in the hope of showing the strongest political opposition to the government. Though the central political task in Brazil is the struggle for democracy and against imperialism, the PT says nothing about these political issues. It is in fact a social democratic party, much like the British Labour Party.

The obsession with this particular section of the working class prevents Kucinski from developing a thorough analysis of all the forces of opposition. Though peasants may rebel, the middle-class dissent, workers strike, and the Church preach liberation theology, there is no discussion of how all these different forces can be united in struggle against the regime nor of who will do this—yet these are the critical political questions in Brazil today.

Kucinski's social democratic sympathies are evident elsewhere. Revolutionary armed political struggle is glossed over. The extraordinary heroic and daring 'long march' of the Prestes Column through the backlands in 1924-7 trying to rally the oppressed to struggle gets only a paragraph of attention. Similarly with the November 1935 Communist-led insurrection. Carlos Marighela, who broke with the Brazilian Communist Party in 1967 to launch armed struggle against the regime is luckier—he takes a whole page to be dismissed! The guerrillas, not the military, get the blame for torture: 'Another important effect of the guerrilla movement was that it led to the formation of a group of torturers' (p43). Although one third of the population still live in the countryside, rural struggles receive poor coverage compared to the many pages devoted to the metalworkers. The shanty-town dwellers likewise receive scant attention.

Brazil, whose crisis is now intertwined with that of imperialism—handcuffed together by \$90bn of debt, still awaits an adequate political account in English of its current contradictions and struggles.

Steve Palmer

Namibia – the ravages of war Barbara König, International Defence and Aid, £1.50, 60pp.

In the eighteenth year of its illegal occupation of Namibia it is clear that South Africa is preparing to strengthen its military and administrative control. High level talks about Namibia's independence continue, and are prolonged and protracted because of the determination of South Africa and the USA that Namibia (and its vast mineral resources) should remain under the control of imperialism. The news about these talks is occasionally reported in the newspapers. What is never reported is the effect that South Africa's illegal occupation has on the people of Namibia and the struggle they are waging against the fascist occupying force. Barbara König's book, *Namibia – the ravages of war*, tells us the facts about Namibia.

These facts are the horrifying story of brutalities, massacres, detention and torture, rapes and disappearances. They are the familiar facts of imperialist barbarity used to intimidate oppressed people fighting for their freedom: in Ireland, South Africa, El Salvador, wherever people are struggling against imperialism for democracy and freedom. What is different about Namibia is that 18 years ago the world agreed that South Africa should get out of Namibia. But the terror continues, the exploitation continues, whilst the imperialist nations play cat and mouse with Namibia's future.

For the Namibian people this means daily terror and Barbara König describes it: 'In January 1982, South African soldiers were reported to have opened fire on a crowd of people celebrating a wedding in a village in the north. 15 people were killed and 37 seriously wounded... Evidence of a massacre of eight people in a small village near Oshikuku in the



north came to light in August 1982... Eyewitness accounts... claimed that the massacre had been carried out by armed soldiers of the SADF, who had lined villagers up against a wall and summarily shot them.' '...three security guards of the State Electricity Corporation assaulted a black man, Moses Namiseb, whom they had encountered by chance as they were driving around the power station in Windhoek. Namiseb suffered heavy blows with a rifle and other attacks. He was found unconscious and died the next day. The three accused reportedly showed amusement in court when evidence was given that victim was found covered in blood... One was sentenced to R400 or four months imprisonment, the other two to R600 or six months imprisonment'.

Over the past seventeen years South Africa has increased its stranglehold over Namibia. Over 100,000 troops are now stationed in Namibia, and

South Africa controls all administration including the schools and hospitals. Yet the people fight back: 'An incident recorded by a foreign journalist visiting Namibia in January 1981 illustrates the effect that army brutality has had on people. During a three hour raid by South African security forces in an unspecified location, all black males were marched one by one to an army ambulance marked with a Red Cross to be screened by a hooded informer. Afterwards, they were lined up in a field, where the security forces fired guns over their heads and made them shout in unison 'We hate SWAPO. We don't hate whites'. One black person from Ovambo commented to the journalist: 'If you were not a SWAPO supporter before that, you were afterwards'.

Despite the terror, the people of Namibia give shelter and aid to SWAPO fighters. In October 1980 Ida Jimmy, a Namibian woman, was gaoled for 7 years for publicly stating what most Namibians believe: '...we are always told not to accept the freedom fighters. As the boers say "terrorists"... so called terrorists must not be given food. Or if you give a terrorist a sleeping place then you must suffer for your action. There is no terrorist... These are our sons that leave the country... so fellow comrades give the freedom fighters food. Give them sleeping places so that they can go forward and carry out their tasks. They are not terrorists, they are your children. They do not come to murder you, but to save you from the oppression of the South African boer regime'.

South Africa, Britain, USA and all the imperialist nations have a vested interest in depriving the Namibian people of their independence, freedom and democracy. In November 1979 the South African government published one-page advertisements in major Western newspapers depicting SWAPO as 'terrorists' and accusing the movement of committing atrocities and indiscriminate killings in Namibia. The real terrorists, the South Africans, are allowed to do this because of imperialism's stake in a Namibia run by the South Africans. They will not tell the truth of the barbarity of the occupying fascist forces. The value of Barbara König's book is that it does.

Carol Brown

Winston Churchill VG Trukhanovsky Progress Publishers, Moscow, distributed in Britain by Central Books, price £4

Vladimir Trukhanovsky, leading Soviet historian and author of many books about recent British history and foreign policy, has written an extremely interesting biography of this reactionary imperialist.

Churchill is usually portrayed by bourgeois mythology as a defender of democracy. Nothing could be further from the truth—he was a loyal champion of British imperialism. As a young soldier, he was troubled by the lack of major wars. He later recalled that:

'Luckily, however, there were still savages and barbarous peoples. There were Zulus and Afghans, also the Dervishes of the Sudan. Some of these might, if they were well-disposed, "put up a show" some day. There might even be mutiny or a revolt in India.'

As a soldier, and later a journalist, Churchill sought adventures in imperialist wars against the people of Cuba, India, Sudan and South Africa. Besides documenting Churchill's personal role in defending British imperialism, Trukhanovsky's book exposes in detail his ambitious parliamentary activities, his hatred and contempt for the British working class, for the Irish people, and everyone oppressed by British imperialism.

The most interesting aspect of this book, however, is the account of Churchill's role in British imperialist foreign policy, and in particular his hatred for the Soviet Union. He realised the grave threat that Soviet rule in Russia represented to the British Empire earlier than many other imperialists. It was Churchill who masterminded the vicious imperialist intervention by 14 countries against the young Soviet Republic. This was defeated by the Russian people, and by international working class solidarity. Churchill encouraged the rebuilding of German imperialism, as a bulwark against Soviet Russia. He later expressed his admiration for Italian fascism because of its hostility to communism:

'Externally your movement has rendered a service to the whole world... Italy has shown that there is a way of fighting the subversive forces... She has provided the necessary antidote to the Russian poison.'

Even at the height of the Second World War, Churchill was already turning his thoughts to the problem of destroying the Soviet Union, an essential pre-condition for consolidating British imperialism and its control over its colonies. As soon as Churchill learnt the details of the atomic bomb, he enthused to his associates about the possibility of terrorising the Soviet Union—then, supposedly, an ally! He later confessed that:

'even before the war had ended and while the Germans were surrendering by hundreds of thousands and our streets were crowded with cheering people, I telegraphed to Lord Montgomery directing him to be careful in collecting the German arms, to stack them so that they could easily be issued again to the German soldiers whom we should have to work with if the Soviet advance continued.'

Trukhanovsky's portrait of this British imperialist is also an exposure of British imperialism, and in particular its foreign policy. This book will teach you more about British imperialism than a dozen books by bourgeois historians.

Steve Palmer

IMPERIALISM IN DISARRAY

The crisis and disarray of El Salvador's ruling class and its US imperialist backers has deteriorated further during the last month. At the beginning of March, US President Reagan was forced to ask Congress for \$60m in emergency military aid to halt the growing paralysis of El Salvador's army. The constantly improving position of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) has driven the US Embassy in San Salvador to conclude that a complete restructuring of the army and government is essential to avoid the collapse of the puppet regime. Yet the US ruling class is split over the wisdom of pouring in millions of US dollars necessary to sustain that regime. \$740m has already been poured in and the position of El Salvador's ruling class has worsened. A section of the US ruling class is therefore clamouring for 'negotiations' and 'contacts' with 'moderate sectors' of the guerillas and their political representatives in the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) in the hope of splitting the united revolutionary forces. At the moment this faction is losing out to Reagan and his henchmen determined to achieve a total military victory and crush the revolutionary forces whatever the cost in US dollars.

While debate continues in Washington, the US-advised El Salvador army has announced that it will adopt the genocidal tactics of 'pacification programmes' used by US troops in Vietnam. The aim is to separate the organised revolutionary forces of the FMLN from the masses by herding the masses into concentration camps. The army thus hopes to isolate and crush the FMLN. The important agricultural provinces of San Vicente and Usulután will be the first testing grounds for this strategy. Knowing well the strength of the FMLN in these provinces, the army intends to deploy two thirds of its 22,000 troops in these areas over the next few months. The chances of success for this strategy, first devised by British imperialism in Malaysia, are

however, small. The vastly improved FMLN co-ordination means that army concentration in any one or two areas makes other provinces vulnerable to revolutionary assault, thus weakening the overall position of imperialism and the puppet regime. In addition, the incompetence and demoralisation of the El Salvador army will not help when faced with a well organised and determined FMLN.

Imperialism's adoption of the genocidal 'pacification' programme is its barbaric method of seeking to destroy the connection between the FMLN and the revolutionary masses of El Salvador. In FMLN controlled liberated zones, this connection is leading to the creation of revolutionary democratic power in which the masses organise production,

distribution, education, health and welfare in accordance with their own needs. Local popular power committees have been formed, whose delegates meet weekly to discuss the war situation and the basic needs of the local community. A representative from each local committee then meets in a Popular Assembly to discuss the questions affecting the



masses in the entire liberated zones. Despite the immense difficulties faced in the liberated zones - constant army attacks, lack of industry, medicine, educational material and armaments to defend themselves - the 200,000 people who live in them, for the first time in their lives have the power to decide their own destiny and a modicum of security

to begin building a better life for themselves and their children. Inevitably, El Salvador's masses are being attracted back to the liberated zones. Over the past period 10,000 refugees who fled the army into Honduras have returned to liberated zones.

It is the spread of this revolutionary power that imperialism is attempting to destroy by its supplies of military aid to the puppet regime and by its current strategy of 'pacification'. The US ruling class is aware of the threat that revolutionary democracy presents to its parasitic multinationals and to the entire capitalist system in the region, and the USA itself. Thomas Enders, US Assistant Secretary of State, urging Congress to support additional US military aid to El Salvador, presented imperialism's fear of revolutionary democracy in El Salvador:

'It would head south across Costa Rica...towards the (Panama) Canal. It would head north, putting enormous pressure on Honduras and reviving the guerilla war in Guatemala and moving towards the Mexican border. So the struggle would go on, but on battlefields where the stakes would be much higher.'

The US imperialists failed in Vietnam and they will fail in El Salvador. The masses will not surrender the power they have won and will not cease struggling until the complete victory of the revolution in El Salvador.

Eddie Abrahams

Western Sahara: a risen people

The people of Western Sahara have been fighting an armed struggle for national liberation against imperialist-backed Morocco for the past seven years. For Morocco and the imperialists these have been years of defeat and despair. For the Saharan people under the leadership of the POLISARIO Front they have been years of immense military and political advances. POLISARIO forces have now liberated over 90% of Western Sahara's 127,000 sq miles.

Yet the Saharan peoples' liberation struggle began many years before. At the 1884 Berlin Conference, when the European imperialist powers partitioned Africa, Spain seized the Sahara. The people resisted fiercely and it was only in the 1950s with French assistance that Spain was able to maintain its rule.

The Sahara was of little interest to Spain and the other imperialist nations, until the tremendous mineral wealth of the area became known. Huge deposits of high-grade phosphates were discovered, along with oil, iron and copper. Imperialist firms from the UK, France and West Germany began to invest in the mining of the phosphates. The profits were enormous - and to protect them Spain's fascist ruler Franco carried out savage repression of the Saharan people with a garrison of tens of thousands of police and soldiers. Popular resistance was met with brutality: peaceful demonstrations were fired on and political prisoners murdered and tortured.

Repression gave birth to more organised resistance, and in 1973 the people founded the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguiet el Hamra and Rio de Oro - the POLISARIO Front. POLISARIO quickly won the allegiance of the people in the towns and villages for their demands of self-determination and an independent democratic republic. An immediate and effective armed struggle

was launched, forcing Spain to withdraw from whole areas. POLISARIO set up its own administration, councils, justice, health and education schemes in the liberated areas.

Spain could not contain the liberation war and her neo-colonial manoeuvres were soon in tatters. Under pressure from her imperialist backers she agreed to transfer the Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania, who had both long nurtured territorial ambitions in the area. By 1976, with Spanish withdrawal complete, Morocco embarked on the first of its attempts to annex the Sahara and control the phosphate mines. POLISARIO responded by proclaiming the independence of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. Morocco and Mauritania began a bloody war against the Saharan people causing over 100,000 to flee as refugees to the liberated zones and Algeria.

The imperialists have given their full backing to that war. In particular US imperialism, ever-anxious to protect its economic and strategic interests in the region, has targeted Morocco for a massive injection of military and economic aid. The Western Sahara is valuable to the US for its strategic position astride the Straits of Gibraltar, and the allegiance of Morocco is vital to the US for bases for its Sixth Fleet and the new Rapid Deployment Force. Morocco is

also used by the US to channel arms to the counter-revolutionary UNITA in Angola.

Alarmed at the military successes of POLISARIO, the Reagan administration has despatched a string of senior officials to Morocco over the past year, and has granted a 3-fold increase in military aid. Huge consignments of tanks, counter-insurgency aircraft and helicopter gunships have been sent along with military instructors and advisers. The Moroccan forces are also trained and armed by apartheid South Africa.

Against the military might of imperialism, POLISARIO has successfully hit back with such deadly blows that in 1979 Mauritania was forced to withdraw from the conflict. Morocco itself has suffered defeat after defeat at the hands of the POLISARIO guerillas. Famous victories were scored in August 1979 at Lebouirate and at Ouarkiz in March 1980. But it was in October 1981 that POLISARIO won their most significant military success. A 3,000 strong guerilla force overran the Moroccan stronghold of Guelta Zemmour, killing hundreds of the defenders and taking 230 prisoners.

POLISARIO has also made impressive political and diplomatic advances. In February 1982 the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic was admitted as the 51st full member of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), dealing a further blow to Morocco's claims to sovereignty on the area. However, the 19th OAU summit meeting in the summer of 1982 in Tripoli was effectively sabotaged by US pressure on neo-colonial African countries, designed to thwart POLISARIO's attendance at the summit. Progressive African nations (including

Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique) continue to support POLISARIO who have recently reaffirmed their OAU membership and announced their intention to attend all future OAU meetings.

At what is now a decisive stage in the liberation struggle, imperialism has significantly increased its support for the demoralised Moroccan forces. With massive US assistance Morocco has constructed a 280 mile-long defensive wall of sand-banks, minefields, barbed wire and sophisticated electronic detection equipment, designed to keep POLISARIO forces out of the phosphate mining area in the North-West of the country. As a POLISARIO leader has stated: 'Morocco created the wall just when we were about to liberate our country. Without US intervention we would have freed our country by now'.

As 1983 began, POLISARIO declared it was commencing the 'final push' to liberate the Western Sahara. Renewed attacks have been made on Moroccan positions, leading to heavy casualties for the enemy and the destruction of an oil and ammunition depot. As the Western Saharan peoples' revolution continues its advance to certain victory, now is the time for all anti-imperialists strenuously to oppose all imperialist intervention. The victory of the Western Saharan revolution will be a tremendous victory for all oppressed people fighting imperialism.

**LONG LIVE THE SAHARAN
ARAB DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC!
VICTORY TO POLISARIO!**

Bill Hughes

● Al Ansar - Israeli concentration camp

Ten months after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, over 10,000 Lebanese and Palestinian political prisoners are still being held in the specially established Al Ansar concentration camp. Their plight was drawn to the attention of a 200 speaker meeting in London on Friday 18 March organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Among the speakers were representative of the Lebanese National Movement, the Deputy Mayor of Nazareth, who is the attorney for Al Ansar's prisoners and Uri Davis, a prominent Jewish anti-zionist intellectual. All speakers compared Israeli treatment of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners with the treatment meted out to Jewish prisoners in Nazi Germany. The Israeli government refuses to recognise the prisoners as political prisoners and treats them worse than animals. One example is the lack of proper medical care, especially for the 300 severely ill prisoners. One man suffering from mental illness (he mixes his food with his own excreta and eats it) is left to languish unattended. Mothers and relatives who are denied all visits to the prisoners have begun a campaign for their release. At one demonstration near Sidon on 17 March Israeli troops opened fire and wounded a prisoner's mother. The intensification of repression in occupied Lebanon has not however extinguished resistance. Indeed resistance is growing with a significant escalation of guerilla operations against Israeli forces. Slowly but surely, the Zionist occupiers are being made to pay dearly for their crimes against the Lebanese and Palestinian people!

Roy Spring

● Repressive measures in Peru

The determined struggle of Peruvian workers and peasants is forcing the reactionary state to use increasingly severe and widespread repressive measures to force the effects of the imperialist crisis onto their backs. After the murder of eight journalists investigating the systematic terror being used against the peasants in the anti-Sendero drive (see FRFI 27) a leading Peruvian journalist, Luis Morales, has been imprisoned on military orders charged with 'terrorism' for exposing army brutality.

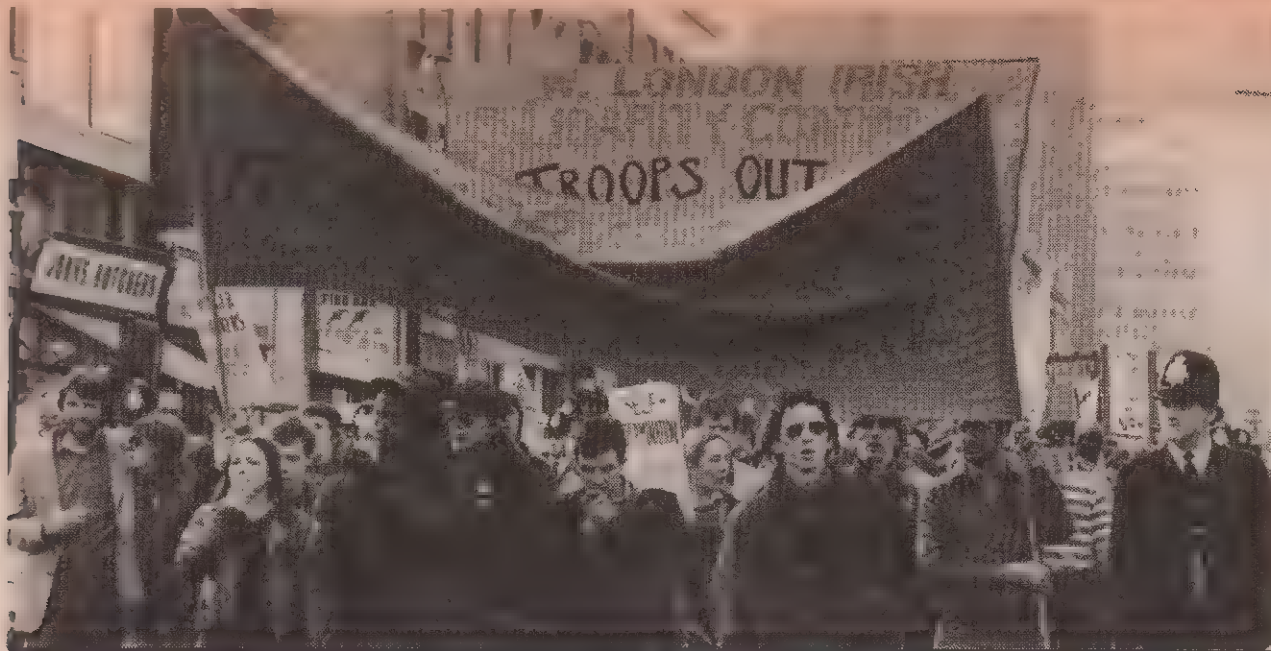
Over US\$2 billion of Peru's debt to the imperialist banks falls due for repayment by 1984. Under IMF instruction the government has removed food subsidies, allowed fuel and rate prices to rise sending inflation towards a record 80%, and is legislating away the remaining vestiges of job security. Public works investment is being cut back by a third. Under these circumstances the industrial workers have launched a wave of strikes culminating in a general strike held on 10 March. The state declared a five-day state of emergency banning all public assemblies in the Lima area. However, while Peruvian finance ministers prepared to meet a group of international bankers in London who would demand further attacks on workers' living standards, the striking workers fought pitched battles with the armed state police. Four workers were killed and hundreds arrested but the factories and transport system were shut down.

Trevor Rayne

● American Prison System

There are approximately 3 times as many prisoners in the USA as in Western Europe: 154 per 100,000 compared to nearly 50 per 100,000. The annual increase in the prison population is 14%. Prison inmates are subjected to horrific overcrowding, violence, racism, homosexual rape and sadism, which are promoted by the guards. 'Kill them', 'Castrate them', 'Use them for medical experiments' are demands about criminal offenders in the USA. And the fact that 48% of the prisoners are black where they are 12% of the total population, shows the rampant racism of the American prison system. At present more than two-thirds of American states are under Federal court order for ignoring the Constitutional rights of prisoners. Capitalist society does not find it wrong to viciously punish those who commit crimes against capitalism. As one local circuit judge put it, 'One of the reasons you shouldn't break the law is that you get raped in gaol.'

Sue Davidson



PAUL MATTHEWS III

Supporters and Sponsors of the 12 March Demonstration

Irish POWs supporting the demonstration: Ray McLaughlin, Kevin Dunphy, Paul Hill, Brendan Dowd, Eddie Byrne, John McCluskey, James Bennet, Paul Norney, Anthony Clarke, Roy Walsh, Stephen Blake, Vince Donnelly, Patrick Hackett, Bobby Campbell, Roy Walsh, Eddie O'Neill, Liam Baker, John Hayes, Tippi Guilfoyle, Sean Kinsella, Gerry MacLochlainn (in a personal capacity).

Sponsors include: Peter Wardlaw (Scottish political prisoner), Jimmy Anderson, Graham Little, Ricky Wrethman (prisoners), Kashmiri Independence Movement, Ireland Komite Nijmegen (Netherlands), Bangladesh Workers Association - London, African Peoples Socialist Party (USA), Workers Communist Party-Marxist-Leninist (Norway), International Solidarity Front-Iran (Glasgow and Edinburgh branch), Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh (founding member of Civil Rights), Connolly/Keegan Sinn Fein Cumann, Alastair Logan (lawyer), Dafydd Elis Thomas MP (Plaid Cymru), East Twickenham and Clerkenwell Labour Party Wards, Bristol Troops Out Movement, Scottish Republican Socialist Party, Welsh Republican Prisoners (Cardiff gaoil), ACTT-Hemel Hempstead Branch, Keith Veness, Bob Crossman, Charlie Rossi, Anna Bowman, Maurice Barnes, Peter Pendsay (LP Councillors), RCG, RCL, Irish Solidarity Committees and others.

TROOPS OUT NOW!

On Saturday 12 March, the national demonstration called by the 20 November 1982 'Building an Irish Solidarity Movement' Conference, made an impressive start as it marched into Euston Road, London. The colourful array of contingents was headed by a green and red banner emblazoned with the demands 'Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now!'.

The 600 strong march united supporters from Irish Solidarity Committees in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Newcastle and North, South, East and West London. In addition there were contingents of demonstrators from Luton Sinn Fein, Bangladesh Workers Association-London, Bristol TOM, the Organisation of Iranian Peoples Fedai Guerillas, Scottish Socialist Republican Party, Essex University Students Union, the Peoples Democratic Front, members of East Twickenham and Islington Central Labour Party wards, the Revolutionary Communist Group, the Revolutionary Communist League and many other

anti-imperialists, republicans and communists attended from Rochdale, Southampton, Hastings, Dundee, Farnham, Slough, Derbyshire, Watford and Nottingham.

As the disciplined and militant march passed through working class districts of Kings Cross, Holloway, Camden Town, Kentish Town and Archway it received a warm and sympathetic response from the local community many of whom are Irish, black, Turkish, Greek and Cypriot workers. Throughout the march the demonstrators kept up enthusiastic and militant chanting of slogans calling for immediate withdrawal of British troops, abolition of

the PTA, support for Irish POWs and self-determination for the Irish people. Scores of bystanders showed their support by joining the demonstration.

Local support for the demonstration was strengthened by the slogans chanted which drew the connection between the British state's suppression of the Irish peoples' fight for freedom and its repression against black and oppressed workers in the streets of London. One slogan which echoed through the streets - 'London - Belfast! Police Murderers Out!' acknowledged the demonstrators' solidarity with the march in Stoke Newington, on the same day, demanding the truth about the police murder of Colin Roach. A contingent of black youth from Leeds drew out the connection further by creating their own slogans such as 'H-Block, Hell Block, Chapel-town Police Station!' and 'Chapel-town Poissie Say Victory to the H-Block Men and Armagh Women!'.

Continue as you have started comrades - I gladly sponsor the 12th of March National Demonstration comrades and if the enthusiasm shown can be continued - and other supporters - who, at present, are wondering why their own particular organisations aren't participating - come forward - then - I am certain we can build a Thatcher-Bashing machine which will surely support all anti-imperialist causes. **Bobby Campbell - Irish POW - Parkhurst prison**



PAUL MATTHEWS III

EXCERPTS FROM THE RALLY

Michael Holden - Sinn Fein member and shop steward

Owen Carron told a conference in Manchester, a labour movement conference, that unity between Republicans and socialist groups in Britain is the most valuable contribution to Irish freedom to be worked for and to be achieved.

Comrades and friends it is up to us, to all of us, to build a strong united Irish solidarity movement in Britain in solidarity with the Irish people, in solidarity with the freedom struggle, in solidarity with the Irish prisoners of war...

Organisation of Iranian Peoples Fedai Guerillas International Solidarity Front - Iran

I would like to bring our revolutionary greetings to the freedom fighters of northern Ireland... the fight that the revolutionaries in Iran are waging against the reactionary Islamic Republic regime has the same cause as the freedom fighters in Ireland.

Bangladesh Workers Association - London

The Bangladeshi population knows about the experience of colonial oppression by the British imperialists... Bobby Sands MP and all the patriotic sons of Ireland have raised the banner of liberty to new heights. The days of imperialism are numbered!

Keith Anderson - CC-BISM

Our Co-ordinating Committee for Building an Irish Solidarity Movement is not a front organisation for any other organisation. It is open to all people and organisations who support the call for 'Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now!'. A united movement must be built. And we are determined to break once and for all with the sectarianism that has bedevilled the solidarity movement in this country in the past...

Maggie Lindsay - Revolutionary Communist Group

We are proud to be associated with the demonstration today and with the work which has been done and will be done to build a real active solidarity movement in Britain. We have no narrow motive and no separate interest to the task of working with any and every force to build a healthy, active and growing solidarity movement in Britain. We stand against British imperialism and for an Irish victory.

MEN OF SELFLESS COURAGE

This poem, written by a black prisoner serving 18 years, was sent by him to the CC-BISM demonstration and was read out to the rally.

Men Of Selfless Courage

In a drab and dreary prison cell
A man slowly wastes away
A man of selfless courage
Who can only hope and pray.

On what should be peaceful streets
Youths build barricades
They defend a war zone
Imperialism made.

Army patrols. Torture centres.
Courts without juries
Tools of terror to maintain the rule
Of British hypocrisy.

A Parliament buys its votes
With undiluted lies
A plastic bullet finds its targets
Another child dies.

The people raise their voice in protest
To demand liberty
While agents of collaboration
Sell-out to tyranny.

The day will come when history
Honours liberation
And men of selfless courage will see
A united Irish nation.

On behalf of all the POWs in Gartree ie Liam Baker, John Hayes, Tippi Guilfoyle, and myself Sean Kinsella, we wish to send our wholehearted support to all those who have worked so hard to bring about 'An Irish Solidarity Movement'. Needless to add this is long overdue for it is essential to present a united front against 'imperialism' in order to have any effect.

We would also like to express our solidarity with all our comrades in British and Irish prisons and indeed all revolutionaries throughout the world who are imprisoned because they have taken up the fight against imperialism. **Sean Kinsella - Irish POW - Gartree prison**

Thousands of leaflets had been handed out and hundreds of papers had been sold by supporting organisations as the march entered Whittington Park for a rally. The rally was opened by Chairperson Terry Marlowe who welcomed the marchers. Stressed above all from speaker after speaker was the need for unity amongst all those forces willing to work in a principled manner in support of the Irish people's struggle. The first speaker was Michael Holden from Hemel Hempstead Sinn Fein. He was followed by speakers from the Bangla-

the rally messages of support were read out from Irish POWs, Welsh Republican Prisoners, Scottish Republican Prisoners and other prisoners to enthusiastic applause. As the rally neared its end, Terry Marlowe announced the news that the police had viciously attacked the Colin Roach demonstration arresting a number of people including Colin Roach's father. Immediately an organised contingent left the rally to go and give support to the Colin Roach demonstration. Terry Marlowe concluding the rally urged everyone to join in the work

Well you have my fullest support for the 12th March and also ALL the POWs here without exception have asked me to also pledge their fullest support ie, McLaughlin, Bennet, Norney, Clark, Walsh, Blake and Paul Hill...

... 'Divide and Rule' is the standard ploy of our common enemy, imperialism, and we must rise above our own natural tendencies to debate miniscule issues and get on with the job in hand - a broad united front against the common enemy, consolidated and inching remorselessly forward. **Vince Donnelly - Irish POW - Albany prison**

desh Workers Association - London, the Organisation of Iranian Peoples Fedai Guerillas, the Scottish Republican Socialist Party, Keith Anderson on behalf of the Co-ordinating Committee for Building an Irish Solidarity Movement, Essex University Students Union, representatives of Irish Solidarity Committees, the RCG and RCL. Throughout

of building an Irish Solidarity Movement.

The success of the demonstration, the first organised by the Co-ordinating Committee for Building an Irish Solidarity Movement, showed that a united, non-sectarian and principled solidarity movement is now being built in Britain. **Pauline Sellars**

BUILD AN IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT!

Join an Irish Solidarity Committee!

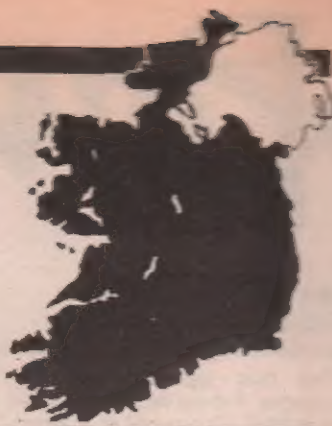
If we wish to join/set up an Irish Solidarity Committee in my/our area. Please put me/us in contact with the nearest ISC.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Tear off this slip and return to C-C BISM, BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX



A Call to Unite

INTRODUCTION

We reprint below a letter from Michael Doherty, PRO St James's Martyrs Sinn Fein Cumann which appeared in the 10 March issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*. Alongside it we print a reply written by David Reed on behalf of FRFI. David Reed is an RCG delegate to the Co-ordinating Committee for Building an Irish Solidarity Movement. The reply by David Reed has been sent to AP/RN.

A Chara,

Following the recent visit to Belfast by Ken Livingstone and Steve and Cathy Bundred, and their promise to build support in Britain for a British withdrawal from Ireland, many of us felt that at last there may be an opportunity for building a broad-based anti-imperialist movement in Britain.

However, having read the latest editions of *Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism! Troops Out and The Next Step*, which represent the three major Irish support groups outside of Sinn Fein, the prospects of a broad front seem much dimmer.

On March 12th, the Irish Solidarity Committee, along with the RCG, have organised a national demonstration in London.

On May 7th, the Troops Out Movement are organising a national demonstration under the slogan of 'Voices for Withdrawal'.

The following day, May 8th, the Irish Freedom Movement and the RCP, together with Sinn Fein (Britain), are mounting a national commemoration of the second anniversary of the deaths of the ten hunger-strikers.

This division among the various support groups only serves to help our enemies.

Indeed, one is tempted to ask just how genuine are these people?

It must be disheartening for Irish POWs in English jails, who have played a major role in promoting a united Irish solidarity movement, to see their efforts come to nothing.

Surely if these groups are genuine in their support then they can at least unite behind the following demands:

(1) A complete British withdrawal from Ireland.

(2) Self-determination for all the Irish people.

(3) Repatriation of Irish POWs from English jails.

These simple demands don't cut across any of the groups' individual ideologies and can therefore form the basis of a strong and united Irish solidarity movement.

Michael Doherty,
PRO,
St James's Martyrs Sinn Fein
Cumann
Belfast

Michael Doherty's letter in AP/RN 10 March 1983 does a great disservice to those genuinely attempting to build an Irish solidarity movement in Britain.

Michael Doherty points to 'division among the various support groups' in Britain which he says 'only serves to help our enemies'. His evidence for this appears to be (a) the existence of three demonstrations on 12 March 1983, 7 May 1983 and 8 May 1983 organised by different sections of the solidarity movement in Britain and (b) his reading of the latest editions of a number of British left publications. There are indeed political divisions in the solidarity movement in Britain just as there are in Ireland. However, instead of treating us to a serious examination of these divi-

sions, Michael Doherty gratuitously insults everyone concerned by writing 'indeed, one is tempted to ask just how genuine are these people'. The fact people have disagreements is no evidence that they are not 'genuine' in what they are doing.

What are the divisions within the Irish solidarity movement in Britain about? They are based on a different assessment of the main forces in Britain which can be won to support the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

The Troops Out Movement (TOM) works in the organised Labour Movement and has for many years unsuccessful-

members to have the same approach.' Another motion preventing dual membership of TOM and the other solidarity groups was not passed. TOM has a delegate structure so that members can influence policy but the overwhelming influence comes from a sectarian leadership.

The Irish Freedom Movement (IFM) is a front organisation of the RCP. It claims to be building an anti-imperialist solidarity movement in the organised trade union movement; however, its membership mainly consists of students. It is impossible for anyone outside the RCP to have any say in influencing policy. The RCP attacks all other sections of the solidarity movement and refuses to work with them. It joined with the Right in attacking Ken Livingstone for his views on Ireland at the time of the banned visit of Sinn Fein elected representatives to Britain. The IFM has no democratic structure - there appears to be no method for non-RCP supporters to join it.



PAUL MATTSSON/IFI

fully attempted to build an alliance with sections of the British Labour Party on the Irish question. To do this TOM has been forced to make concession after concession to the imperialist prejudices of members of the Labour Party and today is calling for the building of an amorphous 'British withdrawal movement...'. It does not believe an anti-imperialist movement can be built in support of the Irish people's struggle for freedom. It is organised in small branches many of them existing on paper only. It does very little public work apart from rallies and conferences. TOM's leadership has become more and more sectarian over time as its influence has decreased. At a recent conference attended by between 40-50 members a motion was passed which stated in relation to the two other Irish solidarity groups:

'Conference resolves that TOM will not at national level, publicise or otherwise support marches, conferences or demonstrations organised by either of these two groups, nor invite their spokespeople to TOM platforms, and urges TOM branches and

lets, whether or not they support the two main demands of the new Irish solidarity movement - Victory to the Irish People, Troops Out Now! This does include, for example, members of the Labour Party and individual MPs and Councillors who can and must be made to support such demands as the right to speak out on Ireland. The Irish solidarity movement will fight to win all those it works with, in whatever campaigns, to the anti-imperialist position on Ireland without making this a condition for working with them.

The new Irish solidarity movement already has 11 committees and support groups, as well as one TOM branch, affiliated to it. All members are actively involved in work on the streets and in working-class communities. The new Irish solidarity movement has an open democratic delegate structure which allows all members to influence and vote on policy. The RCG is only one of the political organisations working in and building the new Irish solidarity movement.

The three demonstrations referred to in Michael Doherty's letter can now be examined in this context. The 12 March demonstration was called by the 20 November 'BISM' Conference and had broad support and sponsorship including 21 Irish POWs, Connolly/Keegan Sinn Fein Cumann, RCG, RCL, 6 Labour Councillors, 2 Labour Party wards, Bristol TOM, 11 Irish solidarity committees and many others. All participating organisations had the right to address the rally at the end of the demonstration. The TOM leadership however advised its members not to support the demonstration. The IFM/RCP instructed its members not to participate and had an IFM Conference call for a rally on the same day which subsequently didn't take place.

There are two marches in May 1983. One called by TOM and another by Sinn Fein. The reason for this is unclear, but it appears to involve a dispute between TOM and Sinn Fein. The new Irish solidarity movement is in no way involved with this dispute nor have the issues at stake been made public. The RCP/IFM is using this dispute in a sectarian way in order to attack TOM and will only support the Sinn Fein demonstration now to take place on 1 May. The new Irish solidarity movement has a position to support all demonstrations and conferences which give support to the Irish people's struggle for freedom. For this reason it will support both the TOM and Sinn Fein demonstrations although it would have preferred to see one united demonstration in May to commemorate the second anniversary of the deaths of the ten hunger strikers.

A call to unite all forces who support the Irish people's struggle for freedom is urgently needed. The new Irish solidarity movement would obviously have no difficulty in uniting with others around the three demands put forward in Michael Doherty's letter - complete British withdrawal from Ireland, self-determination for all the Irish people, repatriation of Irish POWs from English jails. What about the other support groups? Let us put this to the test. Let us therefore fight to build a united demonstration in the autumn around these three demands. Then we shall see who is for unity and who is preventing it taking place. 'By their deeds shall you know them'.

David Reed
FRFI, and RCG delegate to
Co-ordinating Committee, BISM

● Mother Burned To Death In Police Cell

40 year old mother of three Mrs Helen Phillips of Ballymun, Co Dublin, was burned to death at the beginning of March in the local Garda Station. Mrs Phillips was arrested after an argument in a local shop. The Gardaí say she was drunk, was placed in a cell at 5.15pm and checked at regular intervals. But two and a quarter hours later smoke was noticed coming from her cell. Police officers say that thick smoke prevented them from rescuing her.

For the last fifteen years Mrs Phillips lived on the tenth floor of a high-rise block. Twelve years ago her husband died of a heart attack in the tower block lift. She tried to rear her children alone and her neighbours say she became depressed at her situation and at having to live in a tower block. She became addicted to drink they say.

Mrs Phillips' tragic death epitomises the callous neglect of a thoroughly rotten and corrupt system and the criminal indifference of the hated Gardaí, a force which is famous for its constant harassment of republicans and unemployed youth.

G Johnson

● EEC Political Committee Inquiry on NI

In March the European Parliament Committee dealing with European political affairs made a proposal to take evidence in Britain and Ireland and publish a report on the political and economic situation in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland. Conservative Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and Ian Paisley who sit on the Committee were unable to sabotage the confirmation of the inquiry on 10 March.

The hysterical reaction of the Unionist and British politicians stems from the fact that since the inquiry will not be under British control the MEPs may hear the viewpoint of the Sinn Fein elected representatives of the nationalist community. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Ian Paisley sensed a back-door Republican plot by the Free State political parties. Official Unionist leader James Molyneux called for non-co-operation 'with these itinerant meddlers' from the EEC and that on arrival they should be arrested and deported by British immigration officers.

In Westminster direct-ruler Jim Prior made it clear that the only acceptable publicity about the Six Counties was that produced by the British government to promote international understanding of Britain's policy. Britain has been looting and murdering in Ireland for eight hundred years but Prior condemned the inquiry as 'It is a meddling in other people's affairs which will not help'. The Labour Party adopted the bi-partisan policy on Ireland appropriate to its role as a foundation of the British state. Its spokesman on the Six Counties, Don Concannon, agreed with Prior's statement and went on 'We therefore will not be cooperating with any intrusions into the internal affairs of this House by this EEC Assembly'.

The Committee's report will have no practical effect as in June 1981 the full EEC Parliament decided that it had no competence to make proposals for changes in the constitution of the Six Counties. However, reports from internationally credible bodies like this EEC Committee have the embarrassing habit of publicising the poverty and vicious sectarianism of the gerrymandered statelet which 21,000 British security forces are propping up.

However the nationalist people of no property already live with this truth and the IRA, the people's army, will fight on against Britain's military and economic subjugation until the Irish people have the right to self-determination.

Frank Coughlan

STOP PRESS

On Friday 25 March a senior prison officer from the 26 County prison Portlaoise was shot and seriously injured in Dublin. No one has yet claimed responsibility but the shooting is believed to be in response to the humiliating and brutal body searches and beatings imposed on Republican POWs in the Free State prison.

Round-up

West London Irish Solidarity Committee

The fight against obstruction charges of three WLISC members (see FRFI 27) brought an interesting development on 7 March when the case was to have been heard. The police, clearly under pressure following the vigorous campaign waged over these arrests, offered to drop the charges if the three would agree to be bound over to keep the peace for 6 months! They were soon put straight. Clearly the police, who will have to lie really well if the magistrates are to pretend to believe them, anticipate difficulties in Court. They would prefer the committee voluntarily to accept a police record and an effective ban from public work! The case was put over to 10 June, and a picket will be organised for this.

The Committee's work is attracting much attention from the people of West London. The activities of the Committee are expanding, with regular Committee and Public meetings planned. Its bright new banner flew proudly on the National Demonstration of 12 March. For further information on, and donations, to, the WLISC, write to BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

FRFI Supporter – charge dismissed

On 21 March a Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! supporter, Chris Procter, appeared before Highbury Magistrates Court charged with obstruction of the highway for selling the newspaper and distributing Irish Solidarity leaflets in Holloway Road in North London on 3 March.

In the public gallery of the court were not only FRFI supporters but also 25 supporters of Dorothy Ghebikan (see page 15), who had earlier appeared in the same court and who remained to show solidarity. To their shame the RCP, 5 of whom had been selling the *Next Step* at the scene of the arrest, failed to turn up at court as witnesses. What a contrast to an elderly black South African woman who travelled all the way across London to show her support!

In court PC N394 admitted that

his initial approach to Chris Procter concerned the fact that he had 'heard they were collecting for the IRA' and it was only later that he thought of obstruction. The WPC with him admitted that she had earlier walked past Chris Procter and had not noticed any obstruction. When asked why a *strip-search* was necessary of someone charged with obstruction, the WPC pointed out in defence of the police that it was standard practice. Laughter spread through the court.

The barrister, Henry Blaxland, then argued that the selling of newspapers was a reasonable use of the highway, that the arrest amounted to political censorship and that the charge should be dismissed. As the magistrate read out that the charge was dismissed cheers and clapping broke out in court. Supporters of Dorothy Ghebikan stepped forward to congratulate the defendant and all took heart that determined defence can win – in and out of court. Their support had been valuable and yet another FRFI supporter had won in court.

Tooting 3 appeal lost

On Friday 11 March three supporters of the South London Irish Solidarity Committee lost their appeal against obstruction charges arising out of their arrest at a SLISC street meeting in Tooting on Saturday 15 May 1982.

Even though the Tooting 3 had the only independent witness in the case, Judge Edwards along with his two lay magistrates dismissed the evidence and dismissed the appeal. To turn the screws even tighter the Judge awarded the police costs of £100. None of the three had legal aid and SLISC now has to meet a bill of at least £400.

Inspector Newark and his constable, who were the arresting officers have now been promoted. It is now Chief Inspector Newark and the Constable is now Detective Constable in CID. British 'justice' has its rewards for its servants.

SLISC appeals to all readers of FRFI to raise the case in your union, organisation etc and send donations to SLISC, BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

EVENTS

2 – 8 APRIL

MANCHESTER

Street meeting: Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now!
Saturday 2 April 11.00am
Longsight Market
Called by Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee

BRADFORD

Public Forum: British State Shoots To Kill
Thursday 7 April 7.30pm
Central Library, Room 4, Bradford
Bradford FRFI

LONDON

Public meeting: Southern Africa: Victory to the Liberation Forces!
Thursday 7 April 7.30pm
Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, Euston Road.
Speakers include: Jacob Hannai (Deputy Chief Representative SWAPO) Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! Others invited.
Called by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!

9 – 15 APRIL

SOUTH LONDON

Street meeting: Fight British Terror! Defend Democratic Rights!
Saturday 9 April 2.00pm
Meet Clapham Junction British Rail Station
Called by South London Irish Solidarity Committee

NORTH LONDON

Public Forum: Greenham Women Defy The State
Tuesday 12 April 7.30pm
Camden Labour Club, Carol Street, Camden
Called by North London FRFI

MANCHESTER

Public Forum: Smash Apartheid! Sanctions Now!
Thursday 14 April 8.00pm
Mother Macs, Back Piccadilly, Manchester
Called by Manchester FRFI

LEEDS

Public Forum: The British State Shoots To Kill.
Thursday 14 April 7.30pm
Chapel Town Community Centre, Reginald Terrace, Leeds 7 admission 20p
Called by Leeds FRFI

WEST LONDON

Public Meeting: Film show of 'The Patriot Game'
Friday 15 April 7.30pm
Hammersmith Labour Party Rooms, 446 Uxbridge Road, W12.

EDINBURGH

Communist Education:
a) Communist Standpoint
b) Building an Irish Solidarity Movement
c) National Liberation struggles
d) Socialist countries
Starts mid-April, contact FRFI Box 40, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh
Called by Edinburgh FRFI

16 – 22 APRIL

SOUTH LONDON

Street meeting: Victory to the Irish People! Fight British Terror! Defend Democratic Rights!
Saturday 16 April 2.00pm Balham tube
Called by S London Irish Solidarity Committee

NORTH LONDON

Street meeting: Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now!
Saturday 16 April 11.30-1.00pm Kilburn Square.
Called by North London Irish Solidarity Committee

SOUTH LONDON

Public Forum: Greenham Women Defy The State
Tuesday 19 April 7.30pm
Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton.
Called by South London FRFI

23 – 29 APRIL

LEEDS

Free speech rally: Defend Democratic Rights! Defend Free Speech!
Saturday 23 April 2-4pm
Dortmund Square, Leeds
Called by Precinct 6 Defence Campaign

SOUTH LONDON

Street meeting: Build the All London ISC Rally and mobilise for the May commemoration marches.
Saturday 23 April 2.00pm
Meet outside Prince of Wales Pub, Brixton.
Called by S London Irish Solidarity Committee

LONDON

All London ISC Rally: Victory to the Irish People! Fight British Terror! Defend Democratic Rights!
Monday 25 April 7.30pm
Holborn Library, 32 Theobalds Road, WC1
Called by the London Irish Solidarity Committees

LEEDS

Precinct 6 Deputation to the Leeds City Council
Wednesday 27 April

BRADFORD

Bradford Anti-Apartheid Group Public meeting
Southern Africa – The Time To Act! Victory to the ANC! Victory to SWAPO!
Thursday 28 April 7.30pm
Queens Hall, Morley Street, Bradford

30 APRIL – 6 MAY

NORTH LONDON

Street meeting: Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now!
Saturday 30 April 11.30-1pm
Holloway Road/Seven Sisters Road
Called by NLISC

EDINBURGH

All Scottish week-end: Building an Irish Solidarity Movement street work; social; workshops; speakers; exhibition; accommodation.
Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 June
Contact EISC, Box 110 First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh
Called by Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Committee

IRISH SOLIDARITY COMMITTEES

BRADFORD

Irish Solidarity Committee. For details contact BISC c/o Starry Plough Bookshop, The Left Club, 6 Edmund Street, Bradford.

GLASGOW

Irish Freedom Action Committee meets weekly. For details write to GIFAC c/o Box 15, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

TYNESIDE

Action Committee on Ireland meets weekly. For details write to A S King, c/o Porters Lodge, Newcastle University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

NORTH LONDON

Irish Solidarity Committee meets on Thursday 14 April and Thursday 28 April at Camden Labour Club, Carol St, near Camden Tube at 7.30pm For details write to NLISC, BM 4835, London WC1N 3XX

SOUTH LONDON

Irish Solidarity Committee meetings are held on Friday at 7.30pm, at Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton. Next meetings 15 & 29 April. For details write to SLISC, BM 4835, London WC1N 3XX

MANCHESTER

Irish Solidarity Committee. Details and information on activities can be obtained from MISC, Box 47, 164-166 Corn Exchange, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN.

EAST LONDON

Irish Solidarity Committee meets fortnightly. For information and details write to ELISC, BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX

WEST LONDON

Irish Solidarity Committee meets fortnightly. The next meetings are on 1 and 29 April, at Hammersmith Labour Party Rooms, 446 Uxbridge Road, London W12. For more information about the work of the committee write to WLISC, BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX

EDINBURGH

Irish Solidarity Committee. Meets weekly – organising meetings, filmshows, street campaigning, discussion and education. Contact EISC c/o Box 110, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

LIVERPOOL

Irish Solidarity Committee meets fortnightly. For details write to LISC, PO Box 94 Liverpool L69 8AY

SOUTHAMPTON

Following the 12 March demonstration people who attended from Southampton are now planning to set up an Irish Solidarity Committee there. All those living in the Southampton area who would like to participate in this initiative should contact BISM, BM Box 4835 London WC1N 3XX

DUNDEE

Irish Solidarity Committee – contact FRFI sellers

FRFI SUPPORTER GROUPS

FRFI supporters are active in local campaigns, Irish Solidarity Committees, anti-racist campaigns and other political struggles in DUNDEE, EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER, LEEDS, BRADFORD, SOUTHAMPTON, BRISTOL and LONDON.

If you wish to join us in our activities, help us sell FRFI and help build an anti-imperialist movement, contact your local seller or write to FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

RCP/IFM SLANDER

The growing success of Building an Irish Solidarity Movement (BISM) is well known to readers of FRFI (see report on 12 March demonstration this issue). This success has brought hostility and slander from the RCP/IFM. The RCP/IFM is failing to attract any independent forces to its work. In the trade unions – the central focus of its work – it has made no headway at all. This failure drives the RCP/IFM into ever greater sectarianism particularly directed against the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) and BISM. In the March issue of *the next step* (paper of the RCP) there is a vicious lying full-page attack on the RCG and BISM.

The article accuses the RCG of acting as 'cheer-leader for the Labour left' on the grounds that:

'[RCG] has been vocal in the defence of Ken Livingstone despite his condemnations of the national liberation struggle.'

Neither the RCG nor BISM has given any support to Ken Livingstone's statements on Ireland. What both the RCG and BISM have done, and will continue to do, is to defend Ken Livingstone's right to speak on Ireland in order to defend the rights of all to speak on this issue. Only the most narrow-minded and sectarian can object to

this. The ruling class and its puppet press does not attack Ken Livingstone because he is not an anti-imperialist! They attack him because he is not toeing the official line on Ireland. As is always the case the ultra-left – the RCP/IFM – joins together with the right in attacking Livingstone. The same sectarian thinking lies behind the next part of the article which denounces the RCG for saying that Peter Tatchell supported the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. The fact is that prior to the Bermondsey by-election Tatchell not only signed the Troops Out Now petition but also circulated it in Bermondsey Labour Party. In the by-election he

deserted his previous position in a cowardly manoeuvre which gained him nothing. And that was when we attacked him. We do not attack Labour politicians for the sake of attacking them. We attack when they betray the interests of the working class and oppressed. Whenever they defend those interests we will, and do, work with them. Again only a sectarian who cares nothing for the building of an actual movement on Ireland – as opposed to a dummy front organisation – could object to this.

BISM's success is based on its open democratic and non-sectarian practice. The RCP/IFM, in order to attack BISM, refuse to admit that it is an openly and democratically organised movement of which the RCG is a member alongside the RCL, members of Sinn Fein, Bristol TOM, individual TOM members, individual Labour Party members and independents. They repeatedly say 'RCG' when in fact they mean 'BISM'.

To defame BISM they claim that BISM only mobilised for its own 12 March demonstration ignoring the Sinn Fein Bloody Sunday demonstration on 30 January and the forthcoming Sinn Fein march on 8 May. They state:

'Not surprisingly the "forces" which these two groups [BISM and TOM] represent were conspicuous by their absence on the day of the demonstration [Bloody Sunday].'

The BISM contingent on Bloody Sunday was 200 strong as those who travelled up to the march in transport

organised by local ISCs know. Besides this 200, a party of Scottish and Northern England BISM supporters took part in the Derry parade the same day. So much for 'absence'! ISCs throughout Britain are mobilising for the Sinn Fein 8 May (now 1 May) demonstration.

The filthiest lie in this article is the allegation that 'a leading RCG member threatened prominent Sinn Fein activists with physical violence'. The RCG's record of support for the Republican struggle, costing nearly 100 arrests including 3 under the PTA, is the clearest possible reply to this lie. Let the RCP/IFM lie machine either substantiate it or withdraw it.

It is the very success of BISM which has attracted this slanderous attack from the RCP/IFM. Blind to the driving necessity of building a united, democratic, non-sectarian and principled solidarity movement they set out to attack the work of BISM. But the new Irish Solidarity movement is being built and no amount of slander will stop it. And it will continue to fight for unity wherever possible with all forces willing to unite – including the RCP/IFM. We appeal to any serious anti-imperialists in the RCP/IFM to break with sectarianism and join in the building of the new Irish Solidarity movement. We urge all comrades to refuse to work with the RCP/IFM unless and until they cease their sectarian behaviour and withdraw their lying attacks on BISM.

Terry Marlowe

Building an Irish Solidarity Movement



FRFI pamphlet 'Building an Irish Solidarity Movement' by David Reed

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LETTERS

Please note our address is, FRFI BCM Box 5909 London WC1 3XX. SEND US YOUR LETTERS. We welcome letters from readers but please keep them as short as you can

Racist police

Dear FRFI,
On Monday 21 March, I was at the Highbury Magistrates Court where Chris Proctor, a friend of mine, was appearing for obstruction of the highway.

The policeman who arrested him said in court that his arrest was not just due to obstruction but mainly because he was selling a pro-IRA paper. He also said that he was selling it to two white passers-by when arrested — a very significant racist way of segregating people on the street. And he said that in court in front of an Asian Magistrate! Well, the case was dismissed, with no costs.

Just before this hearing, there was the case of Mrs Dorothy Ghebikan and her two children, Mol and Stephen. On Thursday 3 March, at about midnight, Mol had called the police about a family dispute. When 5 policemen arrived, Dorothy, a black Camden Community Worker of CCCR, told them politely that the matter had been settled and their presence was no longer needed. They barged in saying that they needed no warrant and charged up the stairs. Mol appeared on the landing and explained that she was the caller and that the dispute had been settled. But the police went berserk. Dorothy and Mol were severely beaten up, arrested and charged at the police station. Stephen, pleading with the police not to harm his sister, was himself assaulted, received injuries and was then arrested. Mol had to spend two days in hospital. They were charged with assault, criminal damage, breach of the peace and using threatening words. When Dorothy left the police station the next morning a policeman grinned and wished her a happy birthday — she was 52 that night. The case has been adjourned

until 27 April. If anyone wants to help the Defence Campaign, get in touch with CCCR at 58 Hampstead Road, London NW1 or ring either Bunmi, Judi or Sameen on 387 1125. Leaflets and petitions will be available on Friday 25 March at CCCR. Colette Lévy
FRFI Supporter

Reflections on Belfast

Dear FRFI,
In March this year, I was part of a group of women who went to Belfast to participate in pickets of Armagh gaol. This picket has been held now for the past 4 to 5 years to show support for the republican women prisoners incarcerated in Armagh gaol. Before the picket I met and spoke to a number of people, supporters of the republican movement. What they told me proves that the British media do not tell the truth about what is going on in occupied Ireland.

My first sight after setting foot on Irish soil was the RUC Reserves at the ferry terminal armed to the teeth with guns and rifles which made me feel really sick. Later on during my visit I saw for the first time British soldiers on the streets of Belfast. Again this made me feel sick in my stomach, for the people in the area knew they were there and why, but tried to carry on their lives as normally as possible under the suppression, for their own sakes but mostly for the sake of their children. Because after all children are the future for all of us.

I am a white working class wife and mother who has to a certain extent rebelled against the feeling of being a second class citizen under the capitalist system we have at the present. (My resentment against being made to feel a second class

citizen has made me want to understand what a black woman does feel.) Going to Ireland has brought my disjointed ideas and feelings to a more logical appreciation of the role of women under the capitalist system. It also widened my ideas on the question of imperialism to a more concise conclusion. The women in Ireland are fighting on two fronts, one of being a woman, two of being a woman suffering under the yoke of imperialism. They fight all manner of questions that are part and parcel of their day to day lives. They fight and have won a number of battles over housing. The Catholic minority in Belfast suffer the worst housing conditions in Europe. I have seen bad housing where I live in Liverpool but I have never seen such housing conditions as there are in Belfast.

They have open sewers in their streets, the houses are damp and full of mould, waste pipes hang off the walls. The children suffer from many different ailments due to the conditions they are living in. I could go on for ever re-living my weekend visit to Belfast because I learnt such a lot from the people I met. I have tried to put down in this letter what I have seen and my reaction to it. I hope this will come across to people, but I will conclude by saying that it is now up to us to make the Irish solidarity movement a strong and powerful force here in Britain not only to support the people in Ireland but to show to the people here in Britain we are all fighting the same enemy. And that by supporting the Irish and other people fighting the capitalist system we are taking the first of many steps towards breaking the chains we find ourselves in. Lynn Huxley
Liverpool

Scottish socialism

Dear FRFI,
DA's letter in FRFI 26 supporting the call 'for a Scottish Socialist Republic within a Socialist International' raises an important issue which has for too long been ignored by communists.

The first thing to recognise is that communists in England face this issue from a different standpoint to that of Scottish communists. English communists, who clearly wish to see the closest comradeship unity between English and Scottish workers, have no choice but to recognise Scotland's right to self-determination — and this means the right of the Scottish people to decide for themselves, without any outside interference, whether to exercise their right to independence. This is a question of principle for English communists. A principle which, if it is deviated from, would mean putting English communists in the position of being part of an oppressing force against the Scottish people....

For Scottish communists, however, the question is different. Our aim is, of course, to achieve as quickly as possible and as painlessly as possible a secure, strong, socialist state. The question we must answer, then, is will the struggle be aided by our separation from England or will it be aided by our remaining united with England. It is therefore a tactical issue, the answer depending on the concrete situation at any particular time.

So, for example, the greatest communist Scotland has

Harassed for demanding truth

Dear FRFI,
On 12 February I was arrested on a demonstration that was calling for an independent public inquiry into the death of Colin Roach at Stoke Newington Police Station. I was arrested for no other reason than being on the street protesting about the death of Colin. For this I have been falsely charged with threatening behaviour, assault on the police, obstructing highway, obstructing police. In the van along with other demonstrators I was insulted, intimidated and assaulted ie I was grabbed by the ear which I had twisted until it bled. I was held until Monday morning then taken to court.

On 24 February under a pretext of looking for a man who had supposedly entered my house, without a warrant my house was raided by nine police officers accompanied by two dogs. Two days later the police attempted to intimidate me when I went to make a complaint to Deptford Police Station. This harassment comes as no shock to me as I am a member of THE REVOLUTIONARY BLACK ACTIVISTS, and I am not the only black political activist to have been arrested and harassed during this campaign. The case of Ace Kelly is another example.

At Old Street Magistrates Court, on 8 March I was accused of being a ring leader at the 'disturbances'. I have been banned from entering the Borough of Hackney.

I intend now to make a formal complaint against both Stoke Newington and Deptford police, and I urge you to write to both these police stations condemning these actions.

I appear at Old Street Magistrates Court on 10 May at 2.00pm.

Yours,
Cirus Noor
Spokesman (Revolutionary Black Activists)

produced, John MacLean, spent much of his active political life in the British Socialist Party. As late as January 1919 he still called for,

'A revolution in Britain no later than this year.' (In the rapids of revolution, p148).

Yet by 1920,

'MacLean was quite convinced that the Scottish workers were more advanced than the English, and would need to take the lead.' (Nan Milton, John MacLean's daughter, In the rapids of revolution, p17).

So by August 1920 MacLean was calling for a

'Scottish communist Republic' (In the rapids of revolution, p218).

As the situation altered so MacLean's tactics changed. From calling for a British revolution he moved to calling for a Scottish revolution. Today Scottish communists face similar tactical considerations. We need to decide if national separation, or unity with England, will best aid the common struggle for socialism. English communists, on the other hand, must adopt the quite clear-cut principle of supporting Scotland's right to self-determination. There is no other position communists in England and Scotland can take without departing from a clear anti-imperialist position.

MD
Glasgow

Second to none

Dear FRFI,
I am writing to congratulate you on your excellent paper Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! Your coverage of proletarian struggles internationally is second to none. I'm most impressed however with your support for the Irish Freedom Fighters. The so-called left in this country can only offer these comrades fighting for their freedom pathetic 'critical support'.

After the Irish National Liberation Army carried out their successful bombing at Ballykelly some SWP members of Middlesex Polytechnic, where I am a student, told me during the course of discussion on the armed struggle in Ireland that they 'do not support terrorists'. So much for internationalism!

These opportunists make the occasional noise of support of

the Irish people's 'right to self-determination' but whenever the oppressed bring the struggle to the heart of the oppressor and carry out campaigns that the British ruling class do not like, Ballykelly and Hyde Park for example, these opportunists can only criticise! Of course it comes as no surprise to your readers that the SWP actually supported the British army going to Ireland. Therefore it should come as no surprise that they do not support the Irish armed struggle.

Your coverage and support for Irish national liberation is most refreshing. It's good to know that there are papers like FRFI around. That's why I'm subscribing!

Yours with comradesly greetings,
LM
Essex

Censorship

Dear FRFI,
On Thursday 10 March a comrade and myself from the 'Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Committee' were delegated to take our petition 'Victory to the Irish People — Troops Out Now!' to a SWP meeting in the Kirkgate Community Centre, Leith, Edinburgh. We went to explain what the EISC's position on Ireland was and to try to encourage them to affiliate and take an active part in the EISC.

Before the meeting started we stood outside to collect signatures for our petition. We were appalled at the sectarian attitude of some of the SWP members who either ignored us completely, or pushed past us. Accusations such as, 'They've only come here to disrupt our meeting', and 'RCG bastards!', were clearly audible. There were approximately 15 people at the meeting and we managed to collect 4 signatures, 2 of whom were not SWP members.

After everyone was in the room, my comrade and I entered and sat down at the back of the room. Just as we sat down, a girl approached us and asked us, very politely, and very quietly, if she could speak to us about the petition. We agreed, and she indicated we should go outside as the meeting was about to start. When we got outside her attitude changed completely and she spoke to us in a very condescending way. She told us that even though the meeting was open to anyone, it was not open to us, that she knew who we were, and we were at the meeting to disrupt it. We later found out her name was Maureen Watson and it was clear to us that she had very cunningly and deceitfully thrown us out of the meeting.

We tried to speak to her about who we were and exactly why we were there. She refused to listen and continually interrupted us saying that 'the EISC was just a front for the RCG', and that we were, 'trying to disrupt their meeting'. We told her that the RCG are affiliated to the EISC and they have 4 delegates on the committee, but at our regular meetings we have approximately 15 people from different organisations so it is impossible the EISC can be a front for the RCG. She then went on to tell us that the way we were trying to build an Irish Solidarity Movement could never work. 'Collecting signatures on a petition and holding public meetings in working class housing estates was hopeless, and that these people could

hardly fight for themselves never mind fight for the Irish people'.

She continued, saying, 'The only way to build a movement was at the workplace and through your trade union'. We pointed out that many people were unemployed and were not members of a union, and that the people that were in the front line against British imperialism in this country were, the Irish people, the Greenham Common women, and the Youth of our inner-city slums. They do not have anything to do with trade unions. Her only reply was that this was no way to ask them to affiliate to the EISC and that we should go through the correct procedure of writing to the secretary. (Which our EISC secretary has done, but received no reply.) We asked her for the name and address of the secretary. She told us that she was the secretary, but she refused to give us her name and address.

We were shocked and disgusted by the Leith SWP branch's sectarian attitude toward us. If their democracy at meetings by censoring and throwing people out, with no right to speak, it reminds me very much of the Diplock Courts of the 6 Counties of Ireland. Yours faithfully
FS
Edinburgh

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£1136 has been raised so far this year. It should have been £1500 because we need £500 every month to keep FRFI at 20 pence. Let's not fall behind any further: we don't want to accumulate another deficit and then be forced to have a major fund drive again in a few months' time. So let's keep the pounds and pence rolling in!

FRFI defends the rights of the poor, the unemployed, the most oppressed. FRFI aims to involve more people in building an anti-imperialist movement. It can succeed only if its message reaches those who stand up for their rights and want to join the organised fightback against injustice and oppression. It can succeed only with your help. Act now by subsidising FRFI! Send us your donation or hand it in to your FRFI seller. Organise fundraising events — jumble sales, socials, collections.

In March, the FRFI Supporter Groups worked hard and raised £442.70 of the total: £142.90 in North and £132.85 in South London, in Leeds £55, Manchester £27, Bradford £25.60, Edinburgh £22.90, Liverpool £18.90, Dundee £17.75. Individual supporters who want to remain unnamed sent in £17.30. A total of £460. Thank you all!

We will publish all contributions in this column. If you want your name or your organisation mentioned alongside the donation please say so.

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HANDS OFF IRELAND

Birmingham 6

Hunger Strike Threatened

A number of Irish prisoners serving life sentences in English gaols for the 21 November 1974 Birmingham pub bombings, which killed 21 people and injured 181 others, are planning to go on hunger strike on 1 June. In a letter to the Relatives and Friends of Prisoners Committee, one of the prisoners, Patrick Hill states:

'...we have tried everything to get justice, but it seems impossible...

We have been condemned to die in prison for a crime we did not commit and if we are to die in these hell holes, then I for one, would rather die fighting on hunger strike...'

The pursuit of justice by the 6 men involved, is a chronicle of the savage, reactionary and corrupt character of the British legal, police and prison system. Patrick Hill, Hugh Callaghan, Robert Hunter, Richard McKenny, William Power and John Walker were arbitrarily arrested on the evening of the Birmingham bombings. While in police custody they were brutally beaten, threatened with summary execution and had unloaded guns put into their mouths. Subjected to this torture, four of them made statements. These 'confessions', along with other 'evidence' were used in court to convict and gaol 6 innocent men for life.

Their trial was a travesty of justice. In court, Dr Harwood, prison doctor in Winson Green, stated that the 6 were handed over by the police, 'black, blue, battered and bleeding'. The defendants

statements, obtained by force, were clearly inadmissible as evidence. Not so for Judge Bridge who denounced Dr Harwood as an incompetent and perjurer. The Home Office admitted that the 6 had been beaten up—but not by the police. That would have allowed the 6 men to go free! The fact is that the 6 were savagely beaten first by the police and then by the prison screws. The injuries they sustained from the screws covered the injuries sustained by the police, thus allowing police evidence as 'admissible'. Subsequently 14 screws were acquitted for 96 assault charges brought by the Birmingham 6.

Given that the Home Office admitted the prisoners had been beaten up, the culprits had to be the police. The Birmingham 6 were however prevented from bringing charges of assault against them. In January 1980 Lord Denning

claimed that if the 6 won, the police 'were guilty of perjury... violence and threats'. This was an 'appalling vista' for British imperialism. So Lord Denning dug out and issued an 'Estoppel' which itself summarises British 'justice'. It was:

'...brought over by the Normans who used the old French Estoupail which meant a bung or cork by which you stopped something coming out.'

The British state will use every means to stop the truth coming out. The truth would reveal the innocence of the Birmingham 6 and expose the British state as an imperialist machine for the suppression of oppressed peoples and the working class.

The British state has used every means to keep the Birmingham 6 in the hell holes of British gaols. In 1981 Patrick Hill, in protest, went on hunger strike for 41 days. Today once again Irish prisoners are being driven to consider sacrificing their lives for the cause of justice. FRFI unreservedly supports the Birmingham 6 in their battle for justice and demands their immediate release!

Eddie Abrahams

PTA STRENGTHENED

On Monday 7 March the racist anti-Irish Prevention of Terrorism Act was once again renewed. 129 MPs—nearly all Labour—voted against. The number of Labour MPs voting against the PTA—the highest to date—has no practical implications. It has taken nine years and 5,500 arrests for this figure to be reached. The Labour Party's opposition has, in any case, more to do with winning the Irish vote than with any concern for democratic rights. Despite Labour Party conference decisions to oppose the PTA the cowardly Labour Shadow Cabinet only put a two line whip on the vote allowing the likes of Concannon, Mason, Rees and Callaghan—all members of the Labour government which instituted a regime of terror and torture in the Six Counties in 1974-79—to abstain. Even with two party conferences confirming the official Labour policy of opposition to the PTA the Labour Party cannot get all its MPs to oppose it.

In the debate it was made clear that most of the main recommendations of the Jellicoe Report (see FRFI 27) are to be implemented—that is to say the PTA is to be extended, strengthened and made permanent. The government says that it will be renewed for five years and then have to be re-enacted. This is supposed to blind people to the truth, but those who remember the Six Counties Special Powers Act will know what is really happening. The SPA was introduced as a 'temporary' measure in 1922, renewed annually until 1928 when it was renewed for five years, then in 1933 it

was made permanent. The PTA road has been travelled before.

The character of the Labour Party's 'opposition' to the PTA was revealed in the debate during a speech made by Labour MP Kevin McNamara. Mr McNamara (a 'democrat' who once walked out of a television programme because it included an interview with Sinn Féin) declared:

'...ordinary decent coppers using ordinary decent police methods apprehended those responsible for the Birmingham outrages.'

The 'ordinary decent police methods' used to frame the Birmingham 6 for the Birmingham bombings included savage beatings and phony forensic evidence. These 'ordinary decent' methods, backed by corrupt courts, sent the Birmingham 6 to prison under a Labour government. The 6 are now forced to consider a hunger strike to get justice. Now we know what the Labour Party means by such phrases as 'ordinary decent coppers'.

And so the racist anti-Irish PTA remains as a weapon in the armoury of British imperialism. A weapon wielded to silence and intimidate the Irish community in Britain and anyone who organises to fight British imperialist rule in Ireland. All communists, anti-imperialists and democrats must fight to remove this vicious legislation from the statute book.

Terry Marlowe

SECTARIAN KILLINGS

On Wednesday 9 March, Kevin Trainor, Six Counties.

aged 33, was walking along Railway Street in Armagh at about 11.30am. Suddenly several shots were fired at him from a passing car which then sped away. Kevin Trainor was hit in the chest and legs and is in a serious condition in hospital. Late that night, in a phone call to Downtown Radio, the shooting was claimed by the Protestant Action Force, a name previously used by UDA and UVF. The caller stated that the attack on Kevin Trainor marked the start of a campaign against 'Republican Murder squads'; this statement was clearly intended to mark the beginning of yet another round of sectarian murders by UDA and UVF thugs directed against the Nationalist people of the

Pauline Sellars



BISM demonstration, 12 March 1983

shoot-to-kill continues

The British army/RUC murder squads continued their shoot-to-kill policy when they attempted to murder 19 year old Charles McGowan on Sunday 27 February and murdered Loyalist paramilitary William Millar on Wednesday 16 March.

McGowan, who comes from Strabane, was driving his car across the border to Lifford when an RUC squad opened fire, narrowly missing him. McGowan described the incident: 'I heard a bang. I looked back and there was an RUC man and a UDR soldier at the hump. I stopped my car and looked back and the UDR man knelt on one knee and aimed at me, though I now understand it was the RUC who admitted the shooting... One bullet came through the back window and shattered a loudspeaker. Any passenger would have been killed.'

Sinn Féin representative Martin McGuinness pointed out that 'In other attacks, where the victims have not survived, the RUC have lied to cover up for their trigger-happy gunmen. Had Charlie McGowan been shot dead we would no doubt have heard that he was 'high on the wanted list', had pointed a gun

and had been called three times to halt. What is deafening is the silence of the Catholic clergy. Had the IRA been responsible for such an incident they would no doubt have been thoroughly condemned by now.'

William Millar, believed to be a member of a Loyalist paramilitary gang, was shot dead by the RUC near Queens University early in the morning of 16 March. An eye-witness account confirms that, as usual, the RUC opened fire on the car Millar was driving without any warning. Millar was shot dead and his companion was seriously injured. Whether or not the RUC knew they were gunning down a Loyalist, the killing brings the total number of people murdered in British army/RUC shoot-to-kill operations to 10 since last November.

Alan James/Terry Marlowe